WOMAN'S IMAGE IN AUTHORITATIVE MORMON DISCOURSE: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

by

Vella Neil Evans

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Communication

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SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a dissertation submitted by

Vella Neil Evans

This dissertation has been read by each member of the following supervisory committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

29 April 1985 — Chairman: Malcolm O. Sillars

29 April 1985 — Brigham D. Madsen

29 April 1985 — J. Boyer Jarvis

29 April 1985 — Leonard C. Hawes

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FINAL READING APPROVAL

To the Graduate Council of The University of Utah:

I have read the dissertation of Vella Neil Evans in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent and acceptable; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the Supervisory Committee and is ready for submission to the Graduate School.

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ABSTRACT

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a rapidly-growing religious organization whose presence and political influence is increasing throughout the world. This study investigates the image of the ideal woman in that church to understand her stated nature and her roles.

The data were authoritative published discourses selected from the period 1830 to 1984. Such materials were largely located in the general Church papers, magazines and journals and were intended for Church-wide consumption. In addition, a large body of discourse produced specifically for Mormon women, and a smaller body addressed specifically to men, were also considered.

Analytical procedures derived from structuralism, hermeneutics and phenomenology were employed to manage the larger interpretive efforts. Smaller units of the discourse were managed by procedures drawn from content analysis and argumentation analysis, combined with a close rhetorical reading of the texts. The woman's image, itself, was loosely classified into the ecclesiastical, secular and domestic aspects of her role and the dimensions of her purported nature.

Analysis disclosed the following patterns: Woman's image was most pluralistic during a brief period in the early 1840s, and from 1872 to the mid-1930s when the Church itself had a negative image in the larger American culture and when the female members managed their own auxiliaries, published their own magazines, interfaced more closely with women outside the Church, and held frequent, large conferences of their own. It has grown relatively constricted since World War II as the image of the Church has become attractive, as the women have lost their publications and control of their auxiliaries, and as men's priesthood and discourse have become predominant.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The official "image" of women in the Mormon Church is interesting. From the time the institution was organized in 1830 to 1984, conceptions of "female nature" and "woman's role" have varied significantly in authoritative discourse. During the nineteenth century, Mormon women were most often defined in terms that fit the multifaceted image of Colonial American women. On the other hand, contemporary Mormon women are authoritatively defined in the more restricted terms characteristic of the nineteenth century's "Cult of True Womanhood": They should essentially be "pure," "pious," "submissive," and "domestic" (Welter 151-174).

These current aspects of the ideal are evident in the significant 1979 text titled Woman--a book in which fifteen "General Authorities"[1] of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints addressed the "questions that trouble women, especially LDS women, in these latter days" (vii). Of those men, Church President Spencer W. Kimball wrote:

> The role of woman was fixed even before she was created, . . . the male to till the ground, support the family, and give proper leadership; the woman to

> cooperate, bear the children, and rear and teach them.

Kimball also said that "normal women [want] children"; the "divine service of motherhood . . . may not be passed to others"; and "a righteous husband presides over his wife and family" (79-84).

In that same text, Kimball's first counselor, N. Eldon Tanner, wrote that woman's domestic roles could "satisfy her need to express her talents, her interests, her creativity, dedication, energy and skills, which so many seek to satisfy outside the home." Tanner also claimed that the purpose of their education was to enable women to function in a domestic setting (Woman, pp. 6, 10). And Kimball's second counselor, Marion G. Romney, wrote that the "evil practice" of birth control was "one of the greatest crimes in the world today" (145).

Finally, in an essay titled "To the Elect Women of the Kingdom of God," Apostle Ezra Taft Benson claimed that women's "natural attributes, affections and personalities are entirely different from a man," and women should avoid commercial employment because it threatened those natural traits. He also advised women to treat their husbands "with mildness and affection," with "a smile" instead of "an argument," and "never" with a "cross or unkind word" (Woman, pp. 69, 72). Benson's statements are probably more influential than those made by others of the Twelve Apostles because he is, by tradition, next in line to serve as Prophet of the Church.[2]

As noted earlier, the posture just described is not typical of all Mormon discourse. For nearly fifty years in the nineteenth century, the truly devout Mormon woman was exhorted to practice "polygamy" and become one of several wives of one husband.[3] Such marriages showed the Mormons to be utopian in outlook and deviant in practice, because polygamy violated both civil law and most Christian tradition.

In addition to such unconventional domestic relations, pioneer Mormon women were told that they, like the men of the Church, might exercise the more impressive "gifts of the spirit." The women were also enfranchised three times before national woman suffrage was achieved. They were encouraged to train for skilled employment and then enter the commercial work force as they were able. They published one of the significant feminist journals in the country in which they criticized woman's traditional status and admonished each other to expand their interests and activities.

In addition, Mormon women have been respected at national and international women's conventions as charter members of the National Council of Women. And in the early twentieth century, Mormon "Relief Society" women were at the forefront of organized, paraprofessional social work. From roughly World War II to the present, however, the "Sisters'"[4] orthodox image has been constrictively

redefined while many Western women have gained options.[5] Such changes merit investigation.

Statement of the Problem

The study was designed to disclose the concept of the ideal Mormon woman as defined by authoritative members of the Church or in official Mormon publications. To gain that understanding, the following questions were asked: (1) What is the image of the ideal Mormon woman now? (2) How has that conceptualization varied over the course of Church history? (3) How does discourse combine the perceived "facts" and "values" of Mormon culture to "explain," "justify," or "dignify" the woman and her role?

Answers to the first question should disclose whatever traits or characteristics are currently said to constitute "woman's nature" as well as approved and disapproved behaviors for Mormon women. Answers to the second question will disclose perceived changes in woman's nature and changes in official assignments. Answers to the last question will set the woman's image in context and identify exigencies that called the discourse into being. Significant facts and values of Mormon culture will be identified as woman's image is justified and women's issues are addressed.

Finally, the Mormon woman's image will occasionally be contrasted with the image of the orthodox Mormon man and with that of women in the popular American society. Descriptions of these two additional images are

also found in authoritative Church discourse and were constantly encountered by the Sisters. In addition, aspects of the man's behavior or the secular woman's behavior often provoked discourse concerning Mormon women. However, this study will not provide a thorough contrastive analysis with either additional image. Instead, contrasts will be developed to the degree that the Sisters' image can be viewed with some perspective.

Defense of the Problem

As just noted, answers to the first two questions posed by this study describe the constants and the changes in the conception of woman's nature and official role assignments. Such information is intrinsically interesting to those concerned with woman's issues. Alleged differences in male and female "nature" and "gendered" role assignments often have practical political implications. As also noted earlier, this study is not designed to consider "real" behavior or actual practice within Mormon societies. However, differential definitions will be investigated as they are evident within the discourse.

Answers to the last question contribute to an understanding of the Mormon experience as discourse responds to perceived exigencies and discloses cultural values. Such information is important because the Mormon Church is a significant institution: Church members colonized the Great Basin and established the dominant

religion in many western cities. Although the Church claimed only five and a quarter million members in 1984, it is one of the fastest growing Christian sects and one of the wealthiest corporations in America today.[6] Mormon hegemony shapes a distinctive life style in several western communities, and Mormon influence now extends world-wide.[7]

While other dimensions of the Church have been studied at length, however, the women's experience has been essentially overlooked. In 1979, Maureen U. Beecher and Carol C. Madsen, Mormon historians, noted that no adequate study of women's history in the Church had ever been attempted.[8] Neither will this study essay that comprehensive effort. Instead, this investigation is a "rhetorical history" of woman's authoritative "image." As such, it provides a more modest but still useful contribution to the understanding of a significant religious population.

Location of the Problem

The question of woman's "image" lends itself unusually well to communication research. Societies continuously reaffirm and revise their ideologies to keep them current and accessible to members. Throughout the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, woman's image has been constantly redefined in sermons, books, general epistles, Church magazines and newspapers. As suggested earlier, such discourse reflects

the beliefs, values and policies of individual leaders and, at the same time, contributes to an ever-growing, sometimes changing body of information and instruction for Church members.

It is also important to note that analysis of authoritative Mormon discourse reveals the "orthodoxy" of the woman's image, and deliberately does not take into account the many and varying localized interpretations. The authoritative discourse used in this study addressed three distinct Mormon populations: The largest corpus of data was selected from "general" discourse directed towards both adult men and women of the Church. A second large corpus was selected from discourse produced particularly for members of the women's auxiliaries and essentially received by those women. Finally, a small amount of the data was selected from discourse produced particularly for members of the priesthood quorums and essentially received by those men. In all cases, however, understanding of the Mormon woman's image was achieved through analysis of accumulated discourse. The data were "messages," and message analysis is the distinct province of communication studies.

Corpus of Materials

Because the study focused on discourse that was both authoritative and public, sources were significant Church leaders or publications; and the message had to have the potential for being received by a large

percentage of the Church membership. Given the foregoing constraints, the following constitute most of the data base:

The Bible, the Book of Mormon (abbreviated as BoM), the Doctrine and Covenants (abbreviated as D&C) and the Pearl of Great Price--the "scriptures" which form the doctrinal base of Mormonism. All of these writings were surveyed to determine what Mormons believe the Lord or his prophets have said concerning woman and her roles.

Joseph Smith's History of the Church (1820-1848; earlier known as the Documentary History of the Church and abbreviated throughout as DHC)--the most authoritative compilation of directives outside of doctrinal works for the early Church period. Smith's History includes entries from the first prophet's private journals, sermons, addresses, essays and letters; some revelations; minutes of Church meetings and courts; newspaper articles and discourse by other Church leaders.

"Minutes of the Nauvoo Relief Society Meetings from 1842 to 1844" (abbreviated as "Minutes")--the only official record of the women's society that the Prophet organized near the end of his lifetime. These minutes record early standards and promises that had far-ranging impact.

The first decade of the Millennial Star (MS)--a compilation of sermons, essays and letters from important Saints in America as well as original information for the

European Mission.[9] The Star was surveyed for the period 1840 to 1850 because at that time the American Church was too harrassed to publish consistently on its own.

Brigham Young's Journal of Discourses (JD; 1854-1886)--a compilation of sermons by the members of the First Presidency of the Church and other General Authorities. The Journal of Discourses contains the best single collection of authoritative discourse from the "pioneer Utah" Mormon Church.

The Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (JHC; 1830-1973)--an extensive record of local and world happenings including sermons, newspaper and magazine articles, accounts of meetings, weather reports and other commentary. Most of the information was accessible in popular form as it was collected, and the corpus displays the Mormon experience in context with national and even international events.

Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (MFP)--a nearly complete collection of official statements and directives sent over the signature(s) of the First Presidency of the Church from 1833 to 1964. The Messages are the best source of directives from the highest authority in the LDS Church.

The Woman's Exponent (WE)--an unofficial Mormon women's journal published from 1872 to 1914 and depicting Mormon women's interests and attitudes towards a wide variety of subjects. Although the Exponent was neither

funded nor sponsored by the Church, it was the organ of the women's Relief Society, authorized by Church President Brigham Young, and considered an "authoritative" church publication. Exponent editorials display conflicting definitions of woman's image throughout its forty-plus years. Carol Cornwall Madsen's scholarly study of the editorials includes both large quantities of quoted material and a meticulous analysis; therefore her work will be used to investigate Exponent editorials.[10]

"Mormon" Women's Protest--a collection of speeches, resolutions, poems and letters designed to defend Mormon polygamy and woman suffrage to the President and Congress of the United States. This record of an 1886 mass meeting is respresentative of Mormon women's public and private self-definitions at a critical time in Church history.

The Seer--a collection of monthly papers written by Apostle Orson Pratt in 1853 to explain fundamental principles and practices of Mormonism. Pratt's Seer is especially valuable as the first formal, extensive and public interpretation of Mormon polygamy.

The Young Woman's Journal (YWJ; 1889-1929)--the official publication for Mormon adolescent girls and young women.[11] The Journal's format of fiction, poetry, helpful hints, lessons on doctrinal issues, and articles on a variety of subjects displays an extensive range of perspectives. The editorial board and most contributors

were prestigious Mormon women; the Journal was widely read and considered authoritative. It is an excellent source of information regarding what the girls were told about their sex.

The Relief Society Magazine (RSMag; 1914-1970)--the official monthly publication for Mormon adult women. Its format was similar to the Young Woman's Journal; and it was also edited and largely written by prominent Mormon women. Thus, the Magazine is an excellent source of information concerning how Mormon women defined themselves and their obligations.

The Improvement Era (IE; 1897-1970)--the monthy publication of the Priesthood organizations, the Young Men's auxiliary and the Music Committee until 1929 when it assimilated the Young Woman's Journal. From 1929 to 1970 the Era measured the climate of Mormon interests, values and beliefs for adult Church readers.

The New Era (NE; 1970-1983)--the current magazine for young adult members of the Church. Both sexes serve as editors and contributors. The magazine is a good source of information and directives designed specifically for the young adult membership of the Church.

The Ensign (1970-1983)--the current magazine for adult members of the Church. In addition to the traditional format developed by earlier Church magazines, the Ensign also prints the semiannual conference addresses. Because all major Church directives are

initially printed or quoted in the Ensign, it is currently the best source of official beliefs, values and policies.

Conference Reports (CR)--yearly compilations of the sermons preached at the Church's world-wide, "General Conferences" each April and October. The full set includes texts of the 1880 conference and all additional conference sermons delivered from 1897 to 1964 inclusive. After 1964, reports were printed in the Improvement Era and then the Ensign magazines. Conference sermons are particularly serious addresses of the General Authorities to the membership at large.

The journals listed above were sampled as follows: One volume of each journal was read for each fourth or fifth year. Selected journals were staggered so that one volume of some Church publication was read at least every third year from 1889 to 1973. Additional relevant discourse, located serendipitously through cross referencing, was also included in the total corpus of data; and the following specific "guides" for women were also read.

Spencer W. Kimball's My Beloved Sisters--a record of Kimball's addresses to the 1978 and 1979 women's conferences of the Church--the first all-women conferences since one held in 1880. This book is a particularly valuable source of decisive opinion regarding women's nature and current assignments.

Woman--a collection of fifteen essays written by the First Presidency and twelve other General Authorities in 1979. Because this volume is comprised solely of directives to Mormon women, and because it has not been revised or superseded by anything comparable, it is the most authoritative single publication regarding contemporary women's issues.

In addition to the foregoing, the "Church News" section of the Deseret News (the ChNews and the DN);[12] the Relief Society Course of Study; the Melchizedek Priesthood manuals or personal study guides (MPPSG); the Family Home Evening Manuals (FHEM); and various other "manuals" for Mormon teenagers were sampled after 1975 because the Church greatly intensified its focus on women's issues after that time. It is also important to note that while this study was originally designed to cover 150 years of Church history, additional data were analyzed through April of 1984 while the study was in progress.

The extended date just noted concludes the period in which Spencer W. Kimball was still considered the practical head of the Church. By 1984, however, it was obvious that Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency was the only fully functioning member of that body. In addition, in that April Conference the Quorum of Twelve Apostles received two new and atypical members; the women's auxiliary presidencies were completely reorganized; and other changes suggested that the Church

itself might take on a different image in the future. Therefore, the April 1984 date may make even better sense than the projected first 150 years of Mormon history.

Management of the Data

Very little of the foregoing corpus was relevant to the study. Although the women frequently dealt with gender concerns, they spoke and published much less than the men. Authoritative Mormon men produced many more volumes of discourse, but seldom focused specifically on "women's issues." The corpus was therefore managed as follows: Indexed materials were surveyed and relevant discourse was read. Shorter works were read in entirety.

Examples of the discourse that are most representative of a period or position have been incorporated in the "Analysis Section," Chapters II through VIII, as follows: Material from 1830 to 1847 is included in Chapter II to provide an overview of women in the early Church including new scriptures and revelations, the organization of the women's "Relief Society," and the introduction of polygamy. This chapter presents the early precepts concerning women including directives by the first Prophet of the Church, Joseph Smith.

Chapter III is an analysis of woman's image in the public polygamy discourse. Because polygamy was practiced for roughly the first third of the Church's history, because such practice has most effectively distinguished the Church, and because marriage forms are essentially

gender-related, such a separate chapter seems justified. Chapters IV through VI provide longitudinal views of the ideal woman in her ecclesiastical, secular and domestic assignments. Chapter VII is an analysis which contrasts woman's image in the Sisters' publications with the more typical definitions located in "general" and "priesthood-oriented" discourse. Chapter VIII considers the "foundation" and linguistic "outcomes" of the Mormon woman's image--the ultimate justification and some rhetorical results as both are evident within authoritative Mormon discourse. An historical context is provided in the last half of Chapter I; and the study ends with Chapter IX, "Conclusions."

Analytical Considerations

Analysis was based on the assumption that discourse displays and reifies cultural beliefs. It follows that the concept of image is also semiotic and evident in recurring, public definitions. Though "ideational," the woman's image is not private but rather a social phenomenon. Convergent definitions are objectified and operationalized in shared linguistic forms. Given the foregoing assumptions, analysis is an interpretive procedure in search of specific structures. The data are utterances, and the goal is explication. Thus, the analyst must "read" (or construct a reading of) the population's discourse.[13] The final objectives are to

identify specific concepts, chart any changes in those concepts, and display the patterns in intelligible form.

In order to carry out this study, however, it was necessary to find a systematic basis for interpreting the textual material which constitutes the corpus. The unifying perspective, though finally rhetorical, has an interdisciplinary base. In addition, convergence of theory from the behavioral sciences and humanities indicates that public definitions and interpretations are comprised of three large, linguistic structures: (1) the existential, or statements defining what a group believes exists or could exist; (2) evaluative premises, or standards of the right and the good; and (3) the normative, or statements of policy.[14] Effectively, in both public definition and public practice, issues of fact and value are synthesized in the emergence of policy, or role. Robert Berkhofer writes that "the theory of role embraces all the problems" as it must reconcile behavior with belief (91-92).

Thus the three-part configuration of "fact," "value" and "role" creates a large clarifying lens through which to view the complexity of the Mormon woman's image. Shifts in emphasis or content of any of the foregoing reflect the speaker's assessment of relevance and change. Content analysis helps classify and measure focus and significance, and is a valuable tool for comparing discourse against discourse and period against period.

Finer analytic tools, however, are required to identify implicit as well as explicit beliefs. Hermeneutics was particularly useful because such a perspective discloses "themes" and identifies the larger "horizons of meaning" which undergird specific utterances. A structuralist perspective considers the relationship of items to each other within a given system. And theories of persuasion facilitate analysis of formal, informal, abbreviated and presentational arguments.

Additional practical procedures are suggested by the broad concept of "rhetoric" and a concern with strategic linguistic choice. Kenneth Burke asserts that language is "action," or a means of influence, because it both reflects and argues for a perspective (1966, 1969). Even in its least formally constrained and most ordinary usage, language calls into social exchange the items of experience and colors them with value. The choice of one term over another reflects a choice in ways of seeing. And, as utterances reflect specific visions, so they also deflect alternative perspectives. In this manner, all speech is inherently rhetorical.

Practically, however, strategic choice takes many forms; and researchers must disclose specific operative elements in a given statement or unit of discourse. Finer lenses were therefore added to analysis by investigating the union of speech content and form; and the following issues were considered: the speaker's attitude towards, or

relationship with, the audience, the situation and the content of the discourse; the frequency with which specific items recurred; the placement and sequencing of ideas; the genre employed including kinds of argument and narrative structures; and the use of metaphor and imagery. In the most minute maneuvers, the analyst must identify the value-laden nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs and determine their function.

After individual texts are analyzed, prevailing and variant patterns must be synthesized and displayed. In this study, the following issues were addressed: Existential considerations regarding the nature of woman and her surrounding conditions. Evaluative considerations regarding the salience and worth of relevant elements. Normative considerations regarding prescriptions, proscriptions, and role assignments. And contrastive considerations as they applied to each of the foregoing issues.

In summary, the pluralistic approach adopted for this study provides information to answer the following questions: (1) What is the Mormon woman's image? (2) How has it changed over the course of Church history? (3) What forces have constrained its definition? (4) How is the orthodox image justified and dignified? (5) How does it compare, in general, with other relevant images of men or women? Succeeding chapters will provide answers to those

questions as the Mormon woman's image is described, traced, and explicated in its varied rhetorical forms.

Historical Context

Because Mormonism developed as a subculture of nineteenth century America, it was influenced by events in the larger society. In addition, most early members of the Mormon Church had a background in the American Protestant tradition. It is therefore interesting to review briefly some of the experience of other eastern-states women during the same period to put the Mormon woman's image in perspective.

By the time the Mormon Church was organized in 1830, American middle-class women were not participating in community and economic affairs to the degree that Colonial women had done. A growing industrial economy provided many men with salaried employment away from their homes, and wives of such men did not work on family farms or in the family business and were also less involved in community development. In addition, as noted earlier, the ideal nineteenth century American middle-class woman was defined as "pure," "pious," "submissive," and "domestic" (Welter 151-174).

The Cult of True Womanhood

According to Barbara Welter, a "pure" woman was more than just "chaste." Pure women were not "common" or vulgar and were disassociated from the so-called animal

passions. Such women repressed most "survival" instincts and fostered "refined" behavior. The later Victorians claimed that true women were naturally above the baser drives.

A "pious" woman was "religious" and engaged in "righteous" behavior. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich discloses the dimensions of piety in her analysis of Puritan funeral sermons as follows: A pious person sought God early in life, attended church often, read the Bible through at least once a year, kept a journal in which to ponder the doctrines of salvation and the condition of the soul, and prayed and fasted frequently (67-87). Ulrich concludes that the foregoing dimensions of piety applied equally well to women as to men. However, records indicate that women met the visible standards more fully than did nineteenth century men.

For example, between 1800 and 1840, nearly fifteen hundred people joined a new or different sect in Utica, New York; but church records indicate that women greatly out-numbered men at revival meetings, in conversions, and in attendance at regularly-scheduled worship services. Twelve percent of all converts in an 1814 revival were pregnant; and mothers, unaccompanied by their mates, accounted for roughly seventy percent of all baptisms in 1814 and 1819 (Ryan 101).

By 1806 Utica women had established a religiously-based Female Charitable Society; by 1814 a

Female Missionary Society; and by 1824 a missionary society which incorporated seventy auxiliaries and contributed more than $1,200 annually for the support of eleven missionaries. In 1822 the First Presbyterian Church had established female prayer groups and in 1833 the Presbyterian Maternal Association began publishing The Mother's Magazine which focused on the role of mothers in leading their husbands and families to God. Thus women, in the very environs of early Mormon activity, were indeed "pious" in the records of their own churches (Ryan 89-110).

On the other hand, Protestant women in the larger sects were more restricted in their ecclesiastical expression than women in some of the smaller denominations. Quaker women preached and proselyted, while Shakerism was established by a female prophet and Shaker women had superior and then equal office and authority with the men. These two sects were well outside mainstream Protestantism, but congregations were established in many areas occupied by members of the early Mormon Church. In addition, Mormons were generally aware of the doctrine and practices of these small denominations, and even recruited significant converts from among their members. Leman Copley, who gave large tracts of land to the Coleville Branch of the Church, is an example.

A "submissive" woman in the nineteenth century obeyed her husband, father, or brother--whichever was next

of kin--or a clergyman or other male advisor. The degree to which women actually practiced this ideal is unknown. However "image," not "practice," is the subject of this study; and prescriptions for obedience and the image of submissiveness abounded in Protestantism.

For example, God punished Eve with submission in the third chapter of Genesis: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (3: 16); and the best-known women in the Old Testament accepted that role. Admittedly, a few women were noted in the Judaic tradition for independent judgment. Deborah, Jael and Miriam are examples. However, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Esther, Ruth and Abigail have been the Protestant paradigms--all obedient to their husbands or to a wise and righteous male advisor. Protestant Bible stories and Sunday School lessons ignore Jael, mention Deborah briefly, and cite Miriam essentially for her sisterly concerns and dancing skills but not as a prophetess of God.

Paul also promoted female submissiveness in the New Testament; and as the major interpreter of Christ's gospel, his directives were influential. The apostle did state that neither sex was complete without the other, and both were equal in the eyes of God. Eternal considerations aside, however, Paul repeatedly put women in a secondary position on earth. He advised men to "rule over" their wives lovingly. He contended that the woman was the "glory" of the man. In addition, the man was not "of" the

woman, but "the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Cor. 11: 7-10).

In Ephesians Paul admonished, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (5: 22). In First Timothy, Paul wrote:

> Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. (2: 11-14)

Finally, Paul advised women to address their husbands as "lord" and reminded men to honor their wives as the "weaker vessels" (I Peter 3: 5-6). All "pious" New Englanders would be familiar with these passages, and the concept of female submissiveness would be well understood in the areas where the Mormon Church first recruited its members.

"Domesticity," like "purity," "piety," and "submissiveness," reflects the strata of society that generated the concept of "true womanhood." While female mill workers, slaves, ghetto piece-workers and servant "girls" earned their "keep" or wages, middle-class women were not directly paid for homemaking and parenting efforts and were not seen as financial assets in the marriage. "Domestic" women were said to be "supported" by their husbands; and women's efforts outside the household were usually confined to compassionate service for

relatives or friends, or to other voluntary charitable work.

Additional Influences

The four dimensions of "true womanhood" just cited belonged to the new middle-class urban culture of the nineteenth century. However, until well into the third quarter of that century, Mormon women, like Colonial women, pioneered new territory and worked with their husbands or even alone to establish farms, develop home industry, and build communities. Thus there was a physical and communal dimension to their experience that could not meet the middle-class ideal.

In addition, variant definitions of women were also available to those who were aware. For example, Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman was published in 1792. This text, like the American Declaration of Independence, was based on arguments of natural rights and repeated the same values that supported the American Revolution. In 1830 Americans were still proud of their successes in two major revolutions and were living in a climate of Jacksonian individualism. Natural rights, human rights, liberty, freedom and opportunity were all significant social values and thus part of the background of Mormonism.

Utopian societies, antislavery societies and temperance movements also provided women with new opportunities and thus challenged the old perceptions.

Fanny Wright was infamous as a free love advocate. The Grimke sisters, Lucy Stone and Susan Anthony promoted revolutionary causes before mass audiences. And women prayed, bore witness and even preached in some revival meetings, all suggesting that women were not "weaker vessels" and content to abide by that image.

In 1833 coeducational Oberlin College was founded only a few miles from Mormon Church headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio. Lorenzo Snow, brother to the influential Eliza Snow and later Church President himself, attended that liberal institution. In 1836, the first women's college was established in Massachusetts where Mormon missionaries were at work. And, as has been noted, middle-class women of the period were active in benevolent societies of all kinds. Thus unconventional images of woman were also part of the early nineteenth century American experience, and the Church advanced both traditional and nontraditional perceptions of its own.

Summary

The Mormon Church is a significant religious institution and social force. It has been studied extensively, and many Church histories have been written. On the other hand, no thorough treatment of women in the Church has ever been attempted. This study will therefore trace the history of woman's image in authoritative Mormon discourse to determine what changes have occurred, how discourse identifies the exigencies that call repeating

resolutions into being, and how Mormon "facts" and "values" are combined to define and dignify the ideal Mormon woman and her role.

In addition, the Sisters' image will occasionally be compared with the image of non-Mormon women in both secular and Church discourse; and the Mormon woman's image will be contrasted with that of the Mormon man. Such efforts might well have been made by the Sisters, themselves; while authoritative Mormon discourse frequently provides the comparisons suggested.

Finally, it is important to note that the Church was organized and then developed during a period of American history in which both traditional and nontraditional perceptions of women have been prevalent. In addition, succeeding chapters of this study will demonstrate how the Church, too, has often advanced conflicting definitions for the Sisters. These incompatible images, combined with other disparate elements in the doctrine, can create unacceptable paradox for some. On the other hand, such diversity probably provides a major means of institutional survival and Church growth.

Notes

[1] "General Authorities" is the title given to a group of men who are authorized to counsel and direct the members on a Church-wide basis. The President of the Church, his Counselors, members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, members of the First Quorum of Seventies, the emeritus members of the Seventies and the Church Patriarch are all termed "General Authorities." These men have the greatest authority in the Church and should have the most influence in interpreting doctrine to the members. In addition, most Mormons consider the President and his Counselors, the Apostles and the Church Patriarch to be "prophets," "seers" and "revelators" in the strict Biblical sense. See Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 291.

[2] Throughout this study, the word "Church" will be spelled with a capital "C" when the term refers to the "Mormon Church." In addition, significant offices such as "Prophet," "Patriarch," "Apostle" and the like will also be capitalized when used in association with a specific person or body of men holding such a position. This pattern of capitalization is intended to convey the respect that Mormons feel towards the institution and its major office holders. In addition, the practice should differentiate between the LDS Church and its leaders and other religious institutions and offices.

[3] Although the Church publically sanctioned only "polygyny," the Mormons always used the term "polygamy." "Polygamy" will therefore be used throughout the remainder of this study to avoid confusion.

[4] The Mormons, like the Quakers and some other religious groups, refer to adult members as "brothers" and "sisters." No special order is implied, as would be the case in referring to Catholic nuns as Sisters. Most often, "sisters" is written in Mormon discourse with a lower case "s." However, in this study "Sisters" will be written with a capitol "S" to distinguish the term from the filial noun. "Sisters" will also be used interchangably with "women" for stylistic purposes, only; as the nature of the study demands the frequent use of some appropriate female noun.

[5] Increased options for American women are found in the following: The Equal Rights Amendment passed the 92nd Congress and was ratified by seventy percent of the states suggesting that a majority of Americans support the proposal. Social scientists now believe that perceived behavioral differences between men and women result as much from extensive social conditioning as from

differences in inherent abilities; for a review of this research see Seymour Parker and Hilda Parker, "The Myth of Male Superiority: Rise and Demise," American Anthropologist 81(June 1979):289-309. Few civil courts now expect a wife's obedience or ingratiation. Women receive public appointments, are elected to public office and are visible and responsible in the mass media. Women are employed in public, private, and governmental science programs. Legislation prohibits defining many job opportunities as sex-related and forces the hiring of women in previously male-dominated areas. In addition, women across the country are employed in unprecedented numbers. In 1979, when this study was begun, 78% of all available men were in the national work force; but 51% of all available women were also employed (see "National Employment Tables," Utah Job Service, March, 1980). In 1984, even greater numbers of women comprised 43% of the work force ("Women and Lung Cancer" on the Today Show, produced by NBC Television on Monday, 3 September 1984, 8:45 a.m. MDT). Increasingly Americans have adopted nontraditional relationships including experimental marriage, delayed marriage, no marriage, homosexual marriage and alternatives to the biological nuclear family. In 1973 the United States Supreme Court approved abortion during the first six months of pregnancy. The government funds both some abortions and agencies that dispense birth control information and supplies. Following the postwar baby boom, American birthrates have been among the lowest in the world.

[6] Arrington and Bitton cite the growth of the Church in the Mormon Experience, p. 285. See the following concerning the wealth of the Church: "Mormon Money and How It's Made" in the Utah Holiday Magazine, March 1976; George Wilbur quotes Sonia Johnson as follows: "The Mormon Church is one of the 20 wealthiest corporations in the United States," ("LDS Aim Financial, Feminist Charges," The Salt Lake Tribune 4 January 1980, Section D, p. 2). See also "The Economy" in the Denver Post's 1982 special section titled "Utah: Inside the Church State," pp. 52-57; And see "Latter-day Saints: Leaders of Mormonism Double as Overseers Of a Financial Empire," in The Wall Street Journal, 9 November 1983, pp. 1 and 16.

[7] Examples of Mormon influence in national affairs include Ezra Taft Benson, by tradition next to serve as Prophet of the Church, who was Secretary of Agriculture during the Eisenhower administration; Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior from 1961 to 1969; and George Romney, Governor of Michigan and unsuccessful candidate for President of the United States. In addition, Utah's five members of Congress in 1984 were all Mormon including Orrin Hatch, who in 1984 was Chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee and also served on the

Judiciary, Small Business, Budget, and Agriculture Committees and the Office of Technology Assessment; and Senator Jake Garn, who in 1984 was Chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the Senate Committee on Intelligence, and a member of twelve additional subcommittees including several focusing on finance, energy, defense and other military considerations. In 1980, the Salt Lake Tribune's Washington Bureau claimed that Garn was becoming the "third-ranking Republican" in a Republican Senate and Administration (3 December 1980, Section A, p. 4). Senator Paula Hawkins, a Mormon from Florida, campaigned on an anti-ERA platform. Utah Governor Scott M. Matheson has been one of the most popular elected officials in the country, while his local-government policies made him a leader in the "Sagebrush Rebellion" and his opposition to the buildup of a Utah arsenal delayed shipment of bombs to the state and confounded the MX tracking system in the Utah desert. Finally, Utah pollster John Clark claimed in 1984 that while "Mormons make up 70% of the state's population . . . 90% of the legislature is Mormon. No major office holder in the state is Non-Mormon. Because of that, nearly every public decision can be colored by their shared beliefs." (Clark made that statement on 29 February 1984 as part of KUTV's two-week series, "The Mormons . . . Living in Zion." KUTV is a Salt Lake City television station; and the foregoing information is recorded in their film file and also in the station's typescript titled "Politics and the Church" pp. 4-5, dated 29 February 1984. That same program also noted that eight out of nine Utah college and university presidents were Mormon as well as most superintendents of schools and the state superintendent.) In addition to the foregoing examples of national and local influence, extensive Mormon proselyting, temple-building and welfare projects world wide have brought the Church international recognition.

[8] Maureen U. Beecher and Carol C. Madsen, "Task Paper" written for the LDS Church Historian's Department 1979. Special Collections Department, Univeristy of Utah Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[9] The Millennial Star was published as The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star until the name was changed in June of 1952. However, all Church members and scholars refer to the journal as the Millennial Star; and that is the title that will be used throughout this study.

[10] Madsen's work provides not only frequency charts of topical considerations but helpful historical background and biographical sketches of the women involved with the Exponent. See Carol Cornwall Madsen, "'Remember the Women of Zion,'" A Study of the Editorial Content of

the Woman's Exponent, A Mormon Woman's Journal," thesis, University of Utah, 1977.

[11] The young women's organization has variously been known as the Young Ladies' Retrenchment Society (1869-1875), the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (YLMIA; 1875-1934), the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA; 1934-1972), the Aaronic Priesthood Mutual Improvement Association (1972-1974), and the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association (YWMIA; 1972 to present). The two titles used in this study, "Young Ladies" and "Young Women," thus reflect the different periods of time under consideration.

[12] The "Church News" has variously been known as the Deseret News "Church Section" (1931-1943); the "Church News" (1943-1949); the "Church Section" (1949-1952), and the "Church News" (1952 to present). However, "Church News" will be used throughout this paper to avoid confusion.

[13] The notion that "culture" is most effectively "read" from public discourse is well treated by Clifford Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973).

[14] The following scholars contend that the three categories of "fact," "value," and "policy" are used to order human experience: Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: Free Press, 1969); Kenneth Boulding, The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1971); Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936); Clyde Kluckhohn, quoted in Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis; Charles W. Morris, Signification and Significance (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964); Richard D. Rieke and Malcolm O. Sillars, Argumentation and the Decision Making Process (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1975); Milton Rokeach, The Nature of Human Values (New York: Free Press, 1973).

CHAPTER II

WOMAN'S IMAGE IN THE EARLY MORMON CHURCH

Because the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints perceived itself as the literal establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, it is difficult to analyze woman's image by utilizing completely distinct categories for separate "spheres" of her assignments. In a very real way, nineteenth-century Church members believed that everything they did had religious purpose. On the other hand, some amount of subdivision is necessary to manage a large corpus of data. Therefore, with the understanding that categories often blend or overlap, woman's image in the early Mormon Church will be analyzed according to loose concepts of domestic, secular and ecclesiastical activity. Scriptural images of women provide the first orthodox definitions.

Woman's Image in Mormon Scriptures

The Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are the three texts held sacred by members of the early Mormon Church.[1] As suggested earlier, woman's image in the Old Testament has elements that might be labeled "pure," "pious" and "submissive." During that

pre-Christian period, however, women engaged in considerable home manufacture and commerce, and thus were not simply "domestic" in the current sense of that word.

On the other hand, while roughly six score women were named in the Old Testament, men greatly outnumber women in visibility and responsibility. Old Testament women were mostly valued for bearing many sons and marital fidelity. Younger women were valued as virgins. Additional ideal characteristics included obedience, beauty, loyalty, industriousness, wisdom and faith. On the other hand, woman was consistently condemned for what were defined as gender-related weaknesses: nagging and quarrelsomeness, seductiveness and uncleanly physiological functions. She was the property of her father or husband, easily divorced by the latter, a material bounty of war, and assessed at lower value by the priests within the temples. The prevailing metaphor for evil in the Old Testament is the whore.

Women in the New Testament receive different treatment. They frequently accompany Christ, are exemplars in his parables, and are told that God values their souls equally with man's. Christ performed his first miracle for his mother and other miracles on behalf of women. Two women were first to know of the imminence of his coming, and women were first to learn of his resurrection. At one point Christ suggested that righteous study was more important than housekeeping. Women were not praised for

prodigious childbearing nor mentioned for their beauty. Christ forbade divorce except for adultery, and did not personally condemn the adulteress brought before him. Of approximately two dozen women named in the New Testament, most are remembered for purity and piety.

In contrast, Paul said that women were secondary to men, and that they must remain silent in church, celibate, or subservient to their husbands. Despite Paul's disclaimers, however, women obviously taught, prophesied, and were otherwise formally active in the early Christian Church. These conflicting images enabled Catholic women to form prestigious celibate orders. Protestantism, however, rearticulated more of the Old Testament prescriptions; and Mormonism followed suit.

Joseph Smith claimed that he translated the second Mormon scripture--the Book of Mormon--from records inscribed on plates of gold. This history of pre-Columbian Americans serves as a second testament to Christ's divinity and is roughly the same length as the New Testament. It names only six women, however; and three of those are repeated from the Bible: Abraham's Sarah, Eve and the Virgin Mary. The three named women unique to the Book of Mormon are Sarah, wife of Lehi, who functions almost identically to Sarah in the Old Testament; Isabel, a harlot; and Abish who functions similarly to the Samaritan woman at the well.

Other than the three just named, the most notable women in the Book of Mormon are a faithful queen, the excellent mothers of two thousand young warriors, an evil daughter who dances to provoke a murder, a clever servant girl, and abducted or ravished maidens. The approved women are chaste, mothers of many sons, obedient and industrious. In sum, the ideal woman in the Book of Mormon is similar to that in the Old Testament: pure, pious, submissive and "domestic" in the extended sense of that word. The transgression of Eve is greatly softened in the Book of Mormon account; and the Virgin Mary is described as exceedingly beautiful (a trait unmentioned in the Gospels). The prevailing metaphor for evil is a "great and abominable whore."

Revelations received during the formative period of the Church also add to woman's image in the Mormon scriptures. Many of these revelations were preserved and canonized in a book then titled the Book of Commandments and now known as the Doctrine and Covenants. However, only two women are actually named as either the recipients or subjects of God's most recent revelations. In 1830, the Prophet's first wife, Emma Smith, received a personal directive through her husband (D&C 25).[2] Fourteen years later, Emma was warned to accept plural marriage or be destroyed (D&C 132: 54). And one woman was identified as a worthy recipient of Church support.

On the other hand, scores of men received personal commentary and instructions. Even if one ignores the many revelations given to Joseph Smith for the Church or for himself, and counts only those revelations given to other individuals for their private use, men outnumber women by more than fifty to one in terms of revelations received. And when one considers that the men were told whether God was pleased with their actions, whether they should sell their farms, change their residence, understand Church policy more clearly, or correct their attitude, the omission of Godly directives for women seems pronounced.

Domestic Images in the Early Church

In addition to paying more attention to men than to the women, the Doctrine and Covenants also suggests that men have more domestic privileges than women. Men were commanded to support their wives financially (83: 2); but they were also dominant in marriage relationships. The Book of Commandments observed, "We believe that husbands, parents, and masters, who exercise control over their wives, children and servants," will be held accountable as their judgments relate to the Church (qtd. DHC II: 247). The Times and Seasons later praised the man who consecrated "his property, his wife and children to the Lord" (1: 85). Both passages suggest that women are at the disposal of their husbands, and the 1843 revelation on plural marriage supports that image.

The 132 Section of the Doctrine and Covenants contains a revelation regarding priesthood authority and the practice of plural marriage among the Saints. That revelation will be more thoroughly examined in the chapter on Mormon polygamy; however, it is useful to note certain inequities here. First, men had the opportunity to take additional wives, but women were limited to one husband (63). Women were also exhorted in stern language to accept the new revelation, but men were not so addressed. Men had the right to take additional wives even if the first wife withheld consent (65). And this specific revelation threatens punishment to women found in adultery, but does not specify a punishment for men in the same state (41-43).

Joseph Smith also prescribed subservience when he told members of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo not to "tease," "war" with, or "jangle" against their husbands--all petty, immature, or hostile behaviors that the Prophet apparently thought women might adopt (DHC 4: 605). He asked the Sisters not to "contradict" or "dispute" their husbands but to have "confidence" in the men and show them only "innocence," "kindness," "affection" and "love" (DHC 4: 605). In addition, the women were not to present "argument" or "murmur," nor offer "cross" or "unkind" words, but exhibit "smiles," "solace," and "affection" (DHC 4: 606-607).

The only comparable passages regarding men's behavior are directives in the Doctrine and Covenants not to "exercise unrighteous dominion" but to govern those under their jurisdiction by "persuasion," and by "long-suffering," "gentleness and meekness," "love unfeigned," "kindness," and "pure knowledge" (31: 9; 121: 41-42). However, Mormon men were not warned against contradicting their wives, disputing their statements, nor murmuring against their wives' judgments. Thus, two sets of prescriptions endow men and women with unequal power. Both were to interact in love and kindness; but the woman obeyed, and the man governed.

Effects of such prescriptions appear in commentary on real behavior. In 1838, Joseph Smith noted that a "Mrs. Brooks" used tea and profanity and contended that because she was not a member of the Church, neither her husband nor the "Council" could do anything about it. However, the Council expelled the couple from the encampment; and Brother Brooks was reprimanded "for not keeping his tent in order . . . , and not keeping his family in subjection, as a man of God, especially as an Elder of Israel" (DHC 3: 127-128). Later, Nathan Staker was also requested to leave camp "in consequence of the determination of his wife" (DHC 3: 128).

Finally, the Sisters occasionally upheld similar definitions of themselves in public. In 1844, the Female Relief Society formally accepted W. W. Phelps's claim that

Nauvoo" that female virtue existed "for the glory and honor of him, whose image she bears and whose help meet she is" (LDS Archives MS/d/2375/Box 8/fd.Misc./Orig.). The term "him" in the foregoing must refer to men rather than to God because woman is defined as man's "help meet." Thus the Sisters concluded that they should assist and glorify man; but the reverse was never stated in early Mormon discourse.

Early Secular Images

As previously noted, it is particularly difficult to construct a category for what might be termed "secular" behavior for nineteenth century Mormon women. The designation is intended to indicate all activities performed outside of Church assignments or attendance, and outside of marriage, homemaking and parenting efforts. However, nineteenth century Church members believed that commerce, politics, recreation and entertainment were all part of their ecclesiastical experience as all were conducted within the kingdom of God by the members of that kingdom. With this understanding in mind, however, some discussion of "secular" behavior is useful.

Images in the Press

Mormon women's image in the press of the period is interesting, although many of the activities became secular only in the reporting. For example, some women were mentioned in Church newspapers when they married or

when they died. When the woman married, she was termed her husband's "consort"; and the following is quoted from an 1841 "Hymenial" column: "MARRIED. . . In this city, March 7th by Elder John C. Bennett, Mr. Henry B. Jacobs to Miss Zina D. Huntington" (Times and Seasons 2: 374). In the foregoing, the participants in the event are listed in order of significance in the Church-city of Nauvoo, Illinois. Bennett held both ecclesiastical and civil office, while Jacobs was an elder of lower rank within the Church. But "Miss" Huntington had little status of her own; and other notices in that paper are written with the same deference to gender and rank.

When the man died, his wife was termed his "relict." If the woman belonged to a prominent family, much was said about her father, brothers, husband or sons and their accomplishments; and if the family was particularly influential, she might be praised for her own piety. In 1834, the Messenger and Advocate announced that "sister SALLY, wife of brother Newel Knight" had died in Clay County, Missouri. The paper also claimed that "her society was agreeable; her walk circumspect and virtuous, and her percepts and examples worthy. . . ." In addition, while "it was her lot to pass through scenes the most trying to her nature . . . she endured without a murmur" (1: 12-13).

When Mary, the "consort of Samuel H. Smith" died, the Times and Seasons noted that some years earlier, while she was still recovering from childbirth,

> . . . she was driven from her home by an infatuated mob, and exposed to a violent storm in the midst of an open prairie for several days . . . [and] before she had recovered of her illness, her companion had to flee for his life and leave her to the mercy of an infuriated community. (2: 235)

Mary's "companion" was the brother of Joseph Smith; and Mary was duly praised for manifesting "a willingness to endure persecution and affliction for Christ's sake." Such images of martyred women have had long life within Church discourse.

The Times and Seasons also made an effort to write a formal history of the Church; and women were again depicted as a victimized group within a persecuted society. For example, the following accounts appeared in successive editions of the paper. In May of 1840, a writer describes a mob attack as follows: They drove Mrs. Smith

> . . . out of her house; there was a heavy snow on the ground--it was about the last of October or the first of November. She took her two children in her arms, and walked three miles through the snow, and waded Grand river, to Diahman. (1: 98)

In August of the same year, Joseph and Jane Young describe part of the Haun's Mill Massacre as follows:

> Miss Mary Stedwell, while fleeing, was shot through the hand and fainting, fell over a log, into which they shot upwards of twenty balls. To finish their work of destruction, this band of murderers . . . [left] widows and orphans destitute of the necessities of life; and even strip[p]ed the clothing, from the bodies of the slain. (T&S 1: 147)

And the following constitutes the lead of that month's paper:

> The first day the saints left Dewitt they traveled 12 miles, and encamped in a grove of timber, near the road.--That evening, a woman, who had some short time before given birth to a child, in consequence of the exposure occasioned by the operations of the mob, and having to move her, before her strength would admit, died, and was buried in the grove, without a coffin. (T&S 7 May 1840)

The foregoing are pitiable. The reality of persecution and the image of suffering pervaded the early Mormon experience.

In addition to serving as subjects for commentary, women also wrote poetry for the Mormon publications; and Eliza Snow, a plural wife to Joseph Smith, dominated that activity. The Times and Seasons infrequently reprinted articles from the women's journals of the day concerning matters of manners or fashion. And women advertised for work or solicited information regarding relatives who were thought to be immigrating or husbands away from home. The following appeared in May of 1841:

> INFORMATION WANTED. Hanna Henderson desires information from her husband Samuel W. Henderson, who left home (Nauvoo city) for the east last July and [has] not been heard of since. N. B. Editors will please give the above publicity. (T&S 2: n. pag.)

In summary, the Mormon woman's image was meager but generally positive in the Church's own papers but worsened over time in the non-Mormon press. In comparison, other women in the first half of nineteenth century were also mentioned in the newspapers only when their behavior

was exceptional by then-current standards. Female births, marriages and deaths in the locally prominent families were reported. The activities of royal women, performances of noted female artists, female victims or perpetrators of shocking crimes, women involved in scandals, and female companions of powerful men all appeared in the secular press. In addition, women were identified as major consumers of household goods and patent medicines. With the exceptions noted above, Mormon papers used similar categories for publicizing the Sisters' experiences.

The Sisters' Own Definitions

In addition to publishing some poetry, women also wrote numerous letters for social causes; and the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo authored some petitions in common. In the summer of 1842, the Society wrote Governor Carlin of Illinois for redress of grievances; and the following excerpts provide something of the flavor of that petition:

> . . . . It would be more consistent with the delicacy of the female character to be silent; but . . . Your Excellency will bear with us if we remind you of the cold-blooded atrocities that we witnessed in Missouri. Our bosoms heave with horror, our eyes are dim, our knees tremble, our hearts are faint, when we think of their horrid deeds; . . . Let the tears of the widows and orphans, the maimed and impoverished speak; and let the injuries sustained by fifteen thousand innocent, robbed, spoiled, persecuted, and injured people speak; let the tale of woe be told. . . . (DHC 5: 146-147)

The foregoing is a good example of its genre. The layering and elaboration of emotional appeals is typical of

nineteenth century romanticism and Victorian stylistics, though the content is peculiar to the Mormons.

In 1844, allegations of wide-spread immorality among the Saints prompted W. W. Phelps to write "The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo" (LDS Archives MS/d/2375/Box 8/fd.Misc./Orig.). President Emma Smith read this essay to the last meetings of the Relief Society; and the Sisters unanimously "approved" the contents ("Minutes," p. 50). In addition, Joseph Smith later assigned responsibility for the impact of the essay to the Relief Society. Therefore, its definitions of women--accepted by the Sisters--are significant. Early in the writing, the women are described as "the softer sex" and "poor defenseless" beings who have natural feelings of "benevolence, compassion, and pity"--thus repeating the ideal of the period. Mormon women were also identified as "Mother's of Israel" and the "timid daughters of Nauvoo" who were filled with "virtue."

In contrast, however, the Sisters' private journals record expanded perceptions. Other researchers have investigated these writings, and publication has added to general knowledge. For example, Linda Newell and Valeen Avery report that women in Kirtland not only spun, sewed, mended and cooked for male temple builders, but some women did masonry work and one drove two yoke of cattle to haul rock (155). Women also provided furnishings for the temple; and most augmented the family income by merchandising services or goods.

Zina Huntington Jacobs notes the following in her Nauvoo diary for 21 February 1845: "Making Me a bleue dress. I knit mittings for at 2 bits a pare" (Beecher 304). On 23 August of the same year she wrote, ". . . spun 34 nots of warp," and three days later, "A very warm day. . . I am laboring" at the spinning "wheel to procure an honest living" (318).[3] Zina's diary also notes that her family was usually out of funds. In addition, the "Minutes" of the Relief Society for 13 May 1842 note that some men were delinquent in paying widows for various services. And Society members concluded that "those men who refuse to pay Sister Hillman what she holds in notes against them, be complained of at the Masonic Lodge" (25).

The Women and Freemasonry

Additional research is needed to determine whether the women, themselves, were also involved in Freemasonry; but some evidence links women to that order. In June of 1844, Zina D. H. Jacobs wrote, "From this day I understand the Kinsmans degree of freemasonry. My husband, being a Master Mason, attended meeting" (Beecher 291). Joseph Smith was also a Master Mason; and the relationship between the Church and Masonry is a complex issue that has been extensively treated in other writing and cannot be investigated here. However, whether or not the Masonic ranks include a "Kinsman's" degree, Zina and other women should not have acquired any information concerning this highly-secret male order.

In addition to Zina's comment, however, high-ranking Mormon men also suggested some relationship between the women and Freemasonry. In a letter read to the entire Female Relief Society on 30 March 1842, Joseph Smith and other General Authorities warned the women against men who might try to corrupt them. However, the authors said that they would not identify the seducers by name, "not knowing but what there may be some among you who are not sufficiently skilled in Masonry as to keep a secret." And the men concluded the document as follows: "Let this epistle be had as a private matter in your society, and then we shall learn whether you are good masons" ("Minutes" 38). As suggested earlier, additional research is needed to determine the extend and degree of the Sisters' relationship to the Masonic Order.

Military Images

The relationship of women to the Nauvoo Legion, a military unit, also is not certain. Women rode along side the militia in practice drills and may have appeared in costume on occasion. On 15 June 1843 the Salem Adviser and Argus noted that "six ladies on horses, with white feathers or plumes waving over black velvet, rode up and down in front of the Legion" (DHC 5: 432). However, these women may have been nothing more than the privileged wives of Legion officers, rather than some kind of organized auxiliary.

On the other hand, good evidence attests to women's presence in other quasi-military affairs. Joseph Smith recorded the "heroic" members of a group of Saints known as "Zion's Camp" in 1834; and the Millennial Star printed part of that list some years later. The account published in the Documentary History of the Church lists the male members of the expedition alphabetically by last names. In all cases a first name is provided, and in some instances a middle initial. However, the eleven women's names are not alphabetized. One is listed simply as "Mrs. Houghton," and another as "----- Ripley." Six of the seven children in the camp were girls. One, however, is listed as "------, daughter of Alvin Winegar." And all the children are listed as descendents of the father, only (DHC 2: 183-185). The Millennial Star for 26 March 1853 reproduces only the list of male names (205). And in both cases, the differential treatment suggests that compilers of the list valued men more highly than the women.

Much the same attitude is apparent in accounts of the famous "Mormon Battalion." The story of five hundred male recruits and their longest infantry march is generally well known both to Mormons and students of western history. However, little has been published concerning the thirty-two women and thirty-one children who also marched, some as far as Colorado, and some to the California Coast. Twenty women were hired as laundresses, and the rest were permitted to accompany their men.

According to the July 1948 Relief Society Magazine, however, "The women who accompanied the Battalion . . . sewed, mended, darned, . . . helped with the meals . . . , and helped to nurse the sick" as well as providing laundry service (35: 436-440).

Some Battalion members were forced by illness to leave camp for Fort Pueblo, and others dropped out in Santa Fe. In total, 141 soldiers and twenty-eight women abandoned the march. However, the July 1907 Young Woman's Journal named four women who completed the distance to the California Coast. One woman had a baby two weeks before arriving in San Diego and one gave birth two weeks later. Unfortunately, the first mother died soon after arrival (YWJ 18: 297). Five other babies were born in the Pueblo camp. Thus one unique aspect of the Battalion women's efforts was that of marching pregnant.

The foregoing indicate several aspects of the Mormon woman's secular image. Outside of private journals, little additional record exists of their activities. This neglect of women in both current journalism and official histories is not peculiar to the Mormons, however. Women's secular contributions have been largely ignored both within and without the Church. In both cases, such oversight makes it difficult to determine the real extent of women's efforts in public affairs; and woman's image in authoritative Mormon discourse is consequently "thin."

Early Ecclesiastical Images

In 1832 the Lord told Joseph Smith that women, "if they are not found transgressors, . . . shall have fellowship in the church" (D&C 83:2). However, like women in most Protestant sects of the time, the Mormon woman was not ordained to preach, proselyte or counsel. She could not christen, baptize, confirm membership, administer a sacrament, perform marriages, organize or supervise the Church. These roles were given to members of the priesthood.

Emma Smith's own revelation, received in July of 1830, suggested extended ecclesiastical powers for her, personally: The Lord said she should be "ordained under her husband's hand to expound scriptures, and to exhort the church according as it shall be given . . . by my Spirit." Emma was also told to "make a selection of sacred hymns" for the Church (D&C 25: 7, 8, 11). However, while these promises may explain some of her later independent behavior, there is no reason to believe that Emma's assignments applied to any other Mormon woman.

Instead, the first volume of the Millennial Star reviews some fundamental precepts. In discussing the "duty and standing" of women in the Church, the author cites those Pauline verses which claim that women should learn in silence with all subjection and that women should not teach or usurp authority over the man. The writer qualifies these injunctions by noting that, "It is a very

different thing to warn the world . . . to repent, . . . from what it is to teach the Church"--thus suggesting that women might informally promote Mormonism in "the world." And he permitted the exercise of the gifts of the spirit--a distinguishing feature of the nineteenth century Sisters' experience: "Women may pray, testify, speak in tongues, and prophesy in the Church, when liberty is given by the Elders, but not for the instruction of the Elders in their duties" (MS 1: 100-101).

The writer also observed that women could "vote" without "breaking silence." And he suggested the following "helpful duties" for the Sisters:

> It is their privilege to make and mend, and wash, and cook for the Saints; and lodge strangers; and wash the Saints' feet; and this is surely a most acceptable treat to the servants of God when they are weary, and their feet are sore with long travels: and we rejoice that the sisters esteem it a privilege thus to minister to our necessities; and it is their privilege, in all such things, to labour with us in the gospel, like the holy women in the days of Paul. . . . (MS 1: 101)

While this essay confirms traditional Protestant roles for women, it also raises new possibilities for the Mormon Sisters. First, the author suggests that women may "pray, testify, speak in tongues, and prophesy" <u>when</u> the Elders permit such behavior. While women in the evangelical sects enjoyed these same opportunities, Protestant women in the stable urban congregations did not exercise the gifts of the spirit as a general practice.

Second, women are told they might labor with men in the gospel, although that possibility is not developed.

Finally, the author suggests that women may appropriately administer to the "Saints," including washing "the Saints' feet." There is some record of women's washing the elders' feet, although the practice was not wide-spread. It is important to note, however, that the writer appears to use the term "Saint" to refer to men in the Church, while writers in the New Testament use it in reference to "holy" persons and all who have been baptized (I Timothy 5: 10; also Bible "Dictionary," p. 89). The following also suggest usage based on gender discrimination.

After the Millennial Star began publication in 1840, and for several years after the Church was established in the Utah Territory, epistles written to the "Saints," and published in the Star, carried the same male association. Such epistles were written by the General Authorities to the "Saints scattered abroad" and to the "Church abroad" or "in the world." But these designations were also typically followed by a gendered salutation such as "Dear Brethren." For example, the lead article in the Millennial Star for June 1842 begins as follows:

> An Epistle of the Twelve: To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in its various Branches and Conferences in Europe,--Greetings: Beloved Brethren.--We feel it our privilege . . . .

The epistle is signed by Brigham Young and other apostles (MS 3: 17).

One might argue that the General Authorities were actually writing to the missionaries in Europe, all of whom were male. But the contents of the epistles suggest a broader audience, and in some cases speak specifically to converts, many of whom were women, regarding their immigration. In addition, the writers might have chosen the salutations "Dear Elders" or "Dear Missionaries" if those were the intended recipients. One might also argue that a letter intended for the "Saints" or "Church" would be addressed to the leadership of that body, and passed along through lines of authority to the rank and file.

Such arguments are weak because the letters were printed in a Nauvoo or Salt Lake newspaper and then reprinted in the Millennial Star. Therefore, the body of the Church had quick access to the information. In addition, even if the salutation were intended for missionaries or Church officers, the designation does not preclude any male member of the Church and thus could read as an epistle addressed to all men. Likely the authors were either copying a form originated by Paul or they consciously or unconsciously overlooked the Sisters. Whatever the case, "Dear Brethren" implies that women are a relatively unimportant group in the Church.

Women also appeared in the Star as subjects of instructive narratives including faith-promoting incidents

or dreams. In one such, when a woman attending a ball was asked to dance by a "religious leader," she refused to learn "the figures." Her sisters begged her to learn the steps that "led to heaven," but she declined. After a week of melancholy, the rebellious woman died of no apparent cause (MS 3: 120-123). In another, a woman shopped for eggs in the public market. All that were attractively displayed and sold at high price were spoiled; but one offering, simply displayed in natural straw, was pure, white, unspoiled, and free for the taking: ". . . the speckled eggs were representations of the different churches of christendom, none of which were recognized as the pure church by the Father"; but the small white eggs "were representative of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (MS 3: 172-173).

In addition to their positive and negative roles in religious parables, women were the subjects of poetry in Church papers, or published their own religious verse. For example, Thomas Ward wrote several poems to women who were potential converts. He implored "Miss B" to "let me lead thy thoughts to heaven" (MS 4: 127-128), and praised "Mary Callagn" for her free heart that "long'd to hear the truths of Heaven." That poem also concluded with the prayer that Mary, like "Miss B," would join the Church (MS 7: 96).

The verses of "Miss E. R. Snow" were also frequently printed or reprinted in the Star. "Zion's

Poetess," as Joseph Smith named her, once addressed several quatrains to Queen Victoria, urging her majesty to accept the Book of Mormon; and this poem reappeared in several Church publications. In addition, Eliza Snow also wrote poems of general encouragement for emigrating Saints, and sympathy to specific individuals to cover specific woes.

Women were also noted in the Star as victims of disease or Satanic possession. In such cases, the elders usually restored the women to health or banished the afflicting spirits, often during a church meeting. Finally, the publication reported some of the activities of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. It approved the petition signed by a thousand Sisters to Governor Carlin of Illinois. And it printed a letter from the Nauvoo Society asking the women in England to join in "a small weekly subscription for the benefit of the Temple Funds" (MS 5: 15).

This Female Relief Society of Nauvoo provided the Sisters with their best opportunities for formal church involvement. In addition, Joseph Smith may have promised early members of the Society important gifts which explain the differences between the Mormon woman's ecclesiastical experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For these reasons, the first Mormon women's auxiliary--the Nauvoo Relief Society--will be discussed next as a separate "ecclesiastical" consideration.

The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo

As previously noted, Protestant women had formed numerous charitable, educational and service auxiliaries within their various congregations by the time the Saints were located in Nauvoo, Illinois. For the first twelve years of Mormon history, however, there was no women's organization within the Church and women held no ecclesiastical office. The Sisters had worked informally on the Kirtland temple, taught an infrequent class, and provided relief to mob victims and other needy members. However, such efforts were not officially organized or facilitated by the Church. When construction on the Nauvoo temple commenced, Mormon women found a new outlet for volunteer service.

A "Ladies Society" that met in the home of Sarah Kimball decided to provide clothing for the male construction workers. Eliza R. Snow, a secret plural wife to Joseph Smith at the time, took the Society's articles of incorporation to the Prophet for his approval. Smith observed, however, that " . . . the Lord had something better for the sisters than a written constitution" (RSMag 56: 88). And on 17 March 1842, Joseph Smith, Willard Richards and John Taylor met with eighteen women in the Lodge room over Joseph's store to organize the first women's auxiliary of the Church.

The "Minutes" of the Nauvoo Relief Society contain the Prophet's early goals for the organization, later

promises, and the Sisters' interpretations of his statements.[4] The "Minutes" also record the Sisters' interests and activities including the goods and services that were donated and distributed on Society initiative. The physical domain and scope of official program appear limited when compared with those of the contemporary Church-wide auxiliary. On the other hand, in public Relief Society meetings, Joseph Smith confirmed the Sisters' rights to exercise their gifts of the spirit; and he apparently bestowed and promised authority that exceed what Mormon women hold today. Significant dimensions of the Nauvoo Relief Society, excluding the "gifts of the spirit," will be discussed in the following analysis. The spiritual gifts of "speaking in tongues" and "healing" will be considered in Chapter four of this study.

The first society meeting. The Prophet Joseph Smith attended several Society meetings during the first year and essentially dominated the organizing session where he announced his three goals for the Sisters: They were to provoke the men to charitable works; engage in their own charitable efforts; and look after community morals and rebuke wrongdoing, to save the elders the trouble of rebuking. Later minutes contain no record that the women provoked the men as the Prophet suggested, but they earnestly pursued his other goals.

The Sisters named their own organization after rejecting names proposed by the men. In addition, Joseph

Smith asked the women to elect their president, have her select her counselors, and he would "ordain them to preside over the society, and let them preside just as the presidency preside over the Church" ("Minutes," p. 2). If this statement were literally interpreted, Relief Society officers would have complete and final authority within their own organization. The Prophet also said, "Let this Presidency serve as a Constitution--all their decisions be considered law, and acted upon as such" ("Minutes," p. 2). Later he suggested that the Society's "minutes" should also serve as the women's "constitution and law" ("Minutes," p. 2).

In contrast to the foregoing, in 1968 Apostle Marion G. Romney claimed that Church President John Taylor believed that "the guidance of . . . Priesthood bearers" was the "something better than a written constitution" that Joseph Smith promised the Sisters (RSMag 56: 89). Given that President Taylor heard Joseph Smith's speech in the first meeting, his own redefinition seems a clear departure from original intent. Whatever Taylor believed, however, Romney repeated his <u>own</u> understanding when he told a Relief Society General Conference that their "constitution" was to be "instructions from the order of the priesthood" (RSMag 56: 89).

Despite subsequent changes in authority, in the 1842 organizing meeting, then-Apostle Taylor "laid his hands on the head of Mrs. Cleveland and ordain'd her to be

a counsellor to the Elect Lady. . . ." He also laid hands on Emma Smith and confirmed her prior blessings upon her ("Minutes," pp. 2-3). At the end of the meeting, Apostle Taylor commended the women and claimed that their society was "organized according to the law of heaven" and "according to a revelation previously given to Mrs. E. Smith" ("Minutes," p. 6).

The "Minutes" include the terms "ordain" or "ordained" six times when referring to the women's assumptions of duties. The terms "set apart" are used only once. In addition, Emma Smith's 1830 revelation stated that she should be "ordained" under the hands of her husband to fulfill her special assignments. It is important to note the usage of the specific word "ordained," because the Church now reserves that word to designate a formal bestowal of priesthood office while "set apart" is now used to indicate induction into nonpriesthood assignments.

In 1953 Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, later President of the Church, concluded that the association of "ordain" with priesthood was a product of later Mormonism; and there was no reason to assume that women "ordained" in the nineteenth century had any special authority (Church History and Modern Revelation 1: 126). On the other hand, Susa Young Gates, Brigham Young's influential daughter, argued that "ordained" had special significance in the nineteenth century Church. Gates also said that Emma

Smith's rejection of polygamy was probably responsible for the Mormon woman's ultimate loss of power (YWJ 16:117).

Subsequent ecclesiastical images. While the women's practice of the "gifts of the spirit" will not be treated extensively here, it is important to note that the Prophet affirmed the Sisters' rights to speak in tongues "for their own comfort" and to heal the afflicted. In public Relief Society meetings, Joseph Smith said that the ancient apostles had promised that both men and women who followed Christ would receive the spiritual gifts. The Prophet also asked who were better qualified to heal than the "faithful and zealous sisters whose hearts are full of faith, tenderness, sympathy and compassion?" And he answered, "No one" (DHC 4: 607).

The Prophet suggested other ecclesiastical powers for the Nauvoo Sisters during the third Society meeting, held 30 March 1842. He told that gathering that they "should move according to the Ancient Priesthood" ("Minutes," p. 11). He also said that he was "going to make of this society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch's day, as in Paul's day" ("Minutes," p. 11). And while the foregoing is not a certain promise of priesthood rank, it suggests that Smith intended something unusual for Society members.

At the end of that same meeting, President Emma Smith read a letter to the Relief Society from her husband and other Church leaders which suggested additional

authority for women. The letter may have been designed to counteract John C. Bennett's efforts to promote "spiritual wifery" among the Saints. At that time, Bennett was excommunicated from the Mormon Church. However, as a former mayor of the city, officer in the Nauvoo Legion, and close associate of the Prophet, himself, Bennett no doubt still carried some influence. Whatever provoked the letter, Smith and his associates gave the Sisters written authority to reject deviant preaching from men of impressive office because:

> . . . we do not want anyone to believe anything as coming from us, contrary to the old established morals and virtues, and scriptural laws regulating the habits, customs and conduct of the society; and all persons pretending to be authorized by us or having any permit or sanction from us are and will be LIARS AND BASE IMPOSTERS, and you are authorized on the very first intimation of the kind, to denounce them as such, and shun them as the flying fiery serpent, whether they are prophets seers, or revelators, patriarchs, twelve apostles, elder, priests, mayors, generals, City Councillors, Alderman, Marshalls, Police Lord Mayors or the Devil . . . . ("Minutes," p. 38)

The letter thus told women they should reject unorthodox claims made by the highest-ranking civil and Church officers. Such authorization added real power to the women's image because Mormons are otherwise taught to follow Church leaders' directives.

Minutes of the sixth meeting, held 28 April 1842, record additional promise. The Prophet observed early in the meeting that "the purpose of his being present . . . was to make observations respecting the Priesthood, and give instructions for the benefit of the society"

("Minutes," p. 18). With Willard Richards listening, Smith later said that "as he had this opportunity, he was going to instruct the society and point out the way for them to conduct . . . " (Minutes," p. 20). The Prophet then "spoke of delivering the keys to this society and to the church--that according to his prayers God had appointed him elsewhere" ("Minutes," p. 20). This remark about "keys"--as "keys" represent "knowledge," "power," and "authority"--is the first of three similar expressions, and the redundancy is significant.

Joseph Smith next exhorted the women to support and have confidence in those

> whom God has placed at the head to lead--that we should arm them with our prayers--that the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them, that they may be able to detect anything false--as well as to the Elders. (Minutes," p. 20)

This second reference to "keys" is somewhat problematic. However, the Prophet was probably not referring to himself or other high-ranking men as the "leaders" in question, because they already held the "keys of the kingdom" that were about to be given to someone. Instead, because of the Relief Society setting, a better interpretation is that Smith promised to deliver important keys to the organization's officers or perhaps even to the members, themselves.

Later in the meeting, Smith told the women that, "After this instructions you will be responsible for your own sins. It is an honor to save yourselves" ("Minutes,"

p. 21). This statement also suggests that the Prophet promised women greater autonomy than they currently had. Finally, near the end of his address, the Prophet told the Sisters:

> This society is to get instructions through the order which God has established, through the medium of those who are appointed to lead and I now turn the key to you in the name of God, and this society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time--this is the beginning of better days of this society. ("Minutes," p. 22)[5]

In the foregoing, Joseph Smith again apparently promised one of the powerful "keys" to Mormon women.

When Apostle George A. Smith edited the Relief Society's "Minutes" in Utah, however, he revised the foregoing statement to read, "I now turn the key <u>in your behalf</u>." Brigham H. Roberts, a General Authority and subsequent Church historian, used the corrupted version in his own writings, including his edition of Joseph's <u>Documentary History of the Church</u>. And almost all authoritative accounts since Smith's revision, including most of the Relief Society's own histories, have carried the variant reading. Obviously, the choice between phrases is critical--the difference between owning power or receiving benefits through another's power. Both the typescript of the "Minutes" and holograph, however, read "turn the key <u>to</u> you"; and the Prophet's own commentary concerning the meeting, written in his personal journal, supports that wording.

This entry for 28 April 1842, printed in Volume IV of the Documentary History of the Church, page 602, reads in part as follows:

> . . . I met the members of the "Female Relief Society," and after presiding at the admission of many new members, gave a lecture on the Priesthood, showing how the sisters would come in possession of the privileges, blessings and gifts of the Priesthood, and that the signs should follow them such as healing the sick, etc. . . And that they might attain unto these blessings by a virtuous life, . . .

Church authorities now define women's relationship to the priesthood as "sharing in the blessings of the priesthood"--usually through marriage to a priesthood bearer. But Joseph's use of "gifts" and "privileges" suggests that women would have active assignments in addition to passive blessings. Thus the "Minutes" of the Society and Smith's journal entry together suggest intended authority for Mormon women.

In concluding his 28 April remarks, the Prophet observed that, "Those ordained to lead the society, are authorized to appoint to different offices as the circumstances shall require." He then "closed his instructions by expressing his satisfaction" in improving "the opportunity." And Secretary Snow observed that, "The spirit of the Lord was poured out in a very powerful manner, never to be forgotten by those present on that interesting occasion" ("Minutes," p. 22).

On later occasions, two additional men of high rank also claimed that the Sisters held special power. On

27 May 1842, Bishop Newell K. Whitney, in the presence of Joseph Smith, told the Society that, " . . . without the female all things cannot be restored to the earth; it takes all to restore the priesthood" ("Minutes," p. 31). And the next year Elder Reynolds Cahoon claimed that the Society was organized according to the "mind" and "order of God, connected with the priesthood according to the same good principles." Cahoon also observed that the "objects and principles of this society are not fully understood . . . the order of the priesthood is not complete without it" ("Minutes," p. 45). Such information should have bestowed dignity on the organization and all its members, and the Sisters tried to increase that respect in pursuit of the Prophet's goals.

The Moral Guardians of Nauvoo. Once Joseph Smith charged the women with maintaining an honorable membership and watching over community morals, the Society apparently tried to comply. In the second meeting, a candidate for membership was accused of libel; but forty-four other women were accepted. In the third meeting the Prophet said the Society was moving too fast and requested a closer examination of every proposed candidate. In addition, in the eighth meeting "Mrs. President" complained about the iniquity in Nauvoo and the Society's failure to expose evil; and the organization voted to suspend a member.

During the ninth meeting, however, Joseph Smith admonished the Sisters for being over-zealous and rigid.

He urged them to show mercy and to "put a double watch over the tongue." He also said that, "a little tale told will set the world on fire." And he added, "At this time the truth on the guilty should not be told openly" ("Minutes," p. 28). On the other hand, at that same meeting President Emma Smith told the women that while there should be no idle rumors, neither should sins be covered--especially sins against the laws of God and the country ("Minutes," pp. 28-29).

During the tenth meeting, held the day after the ninth, Emma Smith announced that the "case" of one Sister was "put over--read a certificate and spoke of dropping the subject." With her husband looking on, Emma also instructed the women to direct their attentions towards the poor ("Minutes," p, 31). Less than two weeks later, however, the Prophet asked the Sisters to return to original standards and admit candidates only after they had submitted petitions signed by two or three members in good standing. He also forgave one Sister and talked about the value of mercy ("Minutes," p. 32).

During the fourteenth meeting, the case of another woman was repeatedly raised and dismissed. Emma voted against the candidate because she felt that, " . . . where we cannot fellowship as a christian we must not let the person suffer in our midst" ("Minutes," p. 35). The next month a woman reported a visit she had had with Sister "M"

who admitted wrongdoing and said she was grateful to have the Society "watch over her" ("Minutes," p. 36).

During the sixteenth meeting, Joseph Smith said, "I would to God that you would be wise. I now counsel you, if you know anything, hold your tongues, and the least harm will be done" ("Minutes," p. 36). Thus, the Prophet requested a "proven pure" membership for the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo and at the same time tried to maintain the secrecy of polygamous relationships which investigation might expose. The resulting inconsistencies in directives are interesting. However, the Sisters pursued iniquity that entire summer, as they were first charged to do; while President Emma Smith led the work, as she was charged to do. At the same time, the women practiced benevolence in more material ways.

Relief Society charity. The night that Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, he donated a $5 gold piece to the relief fund. Willard Richards donated $1; John Taylor donated $2; and the three women officers contributed $1.62. The members agreed to accept donations of all kinds, but not keep jewelry in their treasury. Subsequent records indicate that at each meeting needy members were named as the poor were "represented." At the fourth meeting, $4.75 was collected in cash along with two quilts, one gown, one bonnet, sixteen skeins of silk, one pair of wristlets, one basket and one gold ring. Minutes

of the sixth meeting note that two widows were given two and three dollars, respectively, to school their children.

The Society must have accumulated a large supply of material goods, because at the eleventh meeting the Prophet promised the members land and a house. Smith also said the women might build additional houses for the poor and pay him back by giving orders on his store. Thirty-two women donated approximately $22 at that meeting, but $143 was collected a few days later. On 16 June 1843, the treasurer's report for the previous year notes collections of "about $500" and disbursements of "nearly $400," and the comment that "much good had been done and the hearts of many made to rejoice" ("Minutes," p. 39).

President Emma Smith did not attend any Relief Society meetings in 1843, all of which were held in the summer and autumn months. She wrote the Society, however, encouraging the members to contribute to the temple fund as well as to the poor. And after that request, individual Sisters promised to collect wool in a wagon; donate time; knit, sew and wait on the sick; solicit donations; repair old clothes; distribute wool to the old ladies to knit sox for the workmen; and contribute soap, every tenth pound of flax, one quart of milk a day, muslin and homespun thread. Candles, shingles, coloring and corn also appeared later for distribution.

In addition, that summer four women from each "ward" or local ecclesiastical district, were assigned to

visit members' homes and report at Society meetings. Unfortunately, such reports attest to continuous illness and poverty in Nauvoo. The community suffered frequent outbreaks of dysentery and other water-borne disease. In addition, succeeding companies of converts from the British Isles were usually poor, badly supplied, and subject to ill health.

Society women were often asked to house either an individual or the members of an entire family. On 5 August 1843, reporting Sisters noted that several sick members were "in want of things to eat. . . . " ("Minutes," p. 44). On 13 August, Elder Reynolds Cahoon asked the Sisters when they would want a storehouse; and "Contributions" listed for September 2nd indicate both the materials that the Sisters stored and the economy of Nauvoo. That day the women collected twelve pounds of flour worth 30 cents; three pounds of sugar worth 30 cents; six yards of cloth worth 75 cents; a pound of sugar and a pound of coffee worth 25 cents; and a pair of sheets worth $1.36 1/2 cents. At that same meeting, the women talked about welfare imposters and the need to report all disbursements ("Minutes," pp. 46-48).

In September the Sisters also observed that there was "much illness and suffering" in the community. One woman reported that she dispensed three dollars worth of pills and tonics on her last rounds, but that she could not "go on foot to gather donations and distribute to the

poor" ("Minutes," p. 49). By mid-October, the women reported relapses. Throughout this difficult period the Sisters encouraged each other to pray for the many sick children and to work harder and thus "call down the blessings of God upon us" ("Minutes," p. 50).

Finally, minutes for 14 October 1843 note that a sewing society was proposed to provide clothes and bed coverings for the needy; and the women agreed to meet the next week "at one o'clock to comfort the poor." However, while younger members of the Church instituted societies of their own that winter, no additional minutes exist for the adult women's organization that year. Instead four final sessions were reported on two March days in 1844.

The end of the Nauvoo Society. After a long absence from Society meetings, President Emma Smith called to order the first session held in 1844. On the morning of 9 March, she read "The Voice of Innocence"--noted earlier in this study--to the Sisters and lamented the slander of her brother-in-law Hyrum Smith. The Sisters indicated by vote who would be willing to "receive the principles of virtue--keep the commandments of God and uphold the President in putting down iniquity--was received by unanimous voice" ("Minutes," p. 50). The minutes continue:

> President Smith said that it was her determination to do her duty effectually in putting down transgression --Sister Whitney requested the sisters to pray that Sister Emma might be supported to teach us the principles of righteousness--expressed her fears that

> judgment would begin at the house of God:--President Smith said it was high time for mothers to watch over their daughters--exhort them to keep the paths of virtue. (50)

The two references to virtue--especially to virtue in young women--in the foregoing suggest that Emma Smith was largely concerned with sexual behavior within the Church-city. The meeting adjourned to make room for those who could not fit into the earlier session.

In the 1:00 P.M. assembly, President Emma again stated that the object of the meeting was the problem of slander "on Prest. Hiram Smith by a vile man . . . ." She again read "The Voice of Innocence," which the Sisters approved. And she exhorted the women to follow the teaching of "Bro. Joseph; and when he preaches against vice to take hold of it;--said he meant what he said . . ." Sister Smith also reminded the women to forgive "in consideration of repentance and reformation," and the assembly was adjourned ("Minutes," p. 50).

The Sisters met twice on the same day the following week. At 10 A.M. on 16 March, President Emma Smith stressed the need "of being united among ourselves." She again read the "epistle and defence of the virtuous female part of the community." And she suggested that some Sisters thought that "J. C. Bennett's spiritual wife system" was:

> . . . the doctrine of Brother Joseph--she advised all to abide the Book of Mormon--Doc. & Covenants, &c then read the epistle of President Joseph Smith's written in this book of record--Meeting then closed to re-open at 12 o-clock. ("Minutes," p. 51)

The references cited by Emma Smith all promote monogamy and denounce polygamy. The "epistle" in the "Minutes" is the letter that the Prophet and his associates wrote to the women in 1842 warning them against deviant preaching and practice. In addition, her identification of spiritual wifery further supports the belief that Emma Smith attacked polygamy in Relief Society meetings. At the same time, her husband was quietly promoting the practice among select Church members.

The second session that day began at one o'clock. Emma Smith again read the "Voice of Innocence" and the 1842 letter. She also said that the principles of virtue were the foundations of the Society, but "all had not adhered to them." And Emma exhorted the women to:

> . . . follow the teachings of President Joseph Smith--from the stand--said there could not be stronger language used than just read, and that these are the words of Brother Joseph, her husband.

The Prophet's public sermons or "teachings from the stand" promoted monogamy and denied allegations that the Church practiced polygamy ("Minutes," p. 51).

Finally, Emma Smith claimed "if there ever were any authority on this earth she had it--and had it yet." And she closed by saying she would like to have the women meet together again "when a place can be obtained that all can be present" ("Minutes," p. 51). No additional formal records exist. The Prophet was martyred three months later in June, and Brigham Young shut down the Relief Society.

On 9 March 1845, Young addressed the Seventies Quorum of the Priesthood; and a record of that meeting reads in part as follows:

> President Brigham Young, arose & said he would make remarks relative to things in which many of our Sister have been engaged they have no right to meddle in the affairs of the kingdom of God outside the pale of this they have a right to meddle because many of them are more sagacious & shrewd & more competent to attend to things of the financial affairs. the[y] never can hold the keys of the Priesthood apart from their husbands. When I want Sisters or the Wives of the members of the church to get up Relief Society I will summon them to my aid but until that time let them stay at home & if you see Females huddling together veto the concern and if they say Joseph started it tell them it is a damned lie for I know he never encouraged it but I know where the Chit was laid but I am determined to stay these proceedings for by it our best men have been taken from us. One ounce of preventative is better than one pound cure. (Seventies Record for 9 March 1845, Ch. Arch.)

The foregoing suggests Young's anger and distrust of Mormon women on that occasion. Such definitions as "meddle," "huddle together," "let them stay at home," "tell them it is a damned lie" and "loss of our best men" all support that interpretation.

Young's statement also suggests that women had no independent power within the Church and he intended to prevent their organizing: The clause, "They never can hold the keys of the Priesthood apart from their husbands," accomplishes two purposes. It identifies one problem that provoked Young's speech--the women's claims of independent priesthood authority. However, it also suggests Young's belief that the women <u>could</u> hold the priesthood <u>with</u> their husbands. This issue will be addressed in various settings

throughout the rest of this study. The second consideration, that of reorganizing, is settled by authoritative decree. Young says he is "determined" to "stay" the women's proceedings; but when he wants a Relief Society, he will "summon" the women to his aid. This he did in 1868.

A more problematic statement also deserves attention. Young said, " . . . if they say Joseph started it tell them it is a damned lie for I know he never encouraged it . . . ." The closest referent to "it" is "Relief Society." But Young would have a difficult time proving that the Prophet did not start or "encourage" the women's organization. Hundreds of women and several high-ranking men attended meetings with Smith for that claim to stand unchallenged.

In addition, Young says that "by it" the Church lost some of its best men. Again, the Relief Society organization did not provoke such losses; but women's resistance to polygamy and other independent actions might have led some husbands out of their membership and drawn hostile attention to the Church. Therefore, Young must have used "it" to refer to women's claims of authority --the other stated focus of his attention. And if the women, themselves, claimed that Joseph "started" their belief in priesthood authority, then the same interpretation in this study is well supported.

Summary: Early Church Images

Until the organization of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, "pure," "pious," and "submissive" Old Testament images of women provided models for the Mormon Sisters. The new Church perceived itself as "Israelite"; and women were expected to be "pure" in the sense of "chaste," "pious" in their religious devotion, and "submissive" to their husbands.

In addition, early "Mormon scriptures" and discourse reinforced the New Testament concepts of "piety" (without office, however); and such virtues as "charity" and "compassion" were defined as natural female qualities. This blend of scriptural ideals offset some of the "uncleanly" definitions of the Old Testament; although female quarrelsomeness and seductiveness were still prominent concerns in public discourse. In addition, ideal women were "domestic" in the Biblical sense--industrious within their homes, engaging in "cottage industry," and contributing to the material support of themselves and their families.

Colonizing efforts of the early Church also demanded pioneering activities on the part of women; and the early Sisters were involved with farming and other "rough" work to a greater extent than were urban, middle-class American women of the same period. Mormon women also organized "ladies societies"; authored petitions in common; wrote a little for the Church

papers--mostly verse; advertised in the papers; and were the subjects of parables and narratives supporting Church doctrine and depicting Church persecution. However, while the women were active in the community in a variety of ways, they were essentially invisible as news makers except through their relationships with prominent men or in extraordinary behavior.

Ideal women were above all "wives," a "helpmeet and glory" to their husbands, and "mothers in Israel." However, most early Mormon discourse focused on the "restoration of the Gospel" and the development of the kingdom of God on earth rather than on "marital" and "domestic" considerations. Given this theological focus, it is important to note that the earliest Mormon women were essentially ignored as the recipients of personal revelations from God; and in the beginning, they received no formal Church office or authority.

On the other hand, Mormon women were permitted to practice the gifts of the spirit; and during the period of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo (1842-1844), the Sisters had office, authority, financial and material assets, high visibility and dignity within their own discourse. Brigham Young discontinued the Relief Society before the Saints left Nauvoo, however; and the Church carried West the earlier Old Testament ideals of woman's role which emphasized purity, piety and submissiveness. Later, as the Saints increased their practice of polygamy,

the Sisters' "purity" became an issue outside the Church. Non-Mormons saw plural marriage as the distinguishing feature of the Church; and authoritative discourse created a new "polygamous woman's image" which will be considered in the following chapter.

Notes

[1] The Pearl of Great Price, a fourth Mormon "scripture," will not be discussed at this point because that text was not available to members of the Church until well after the migration to Utah.

[2] A more detailed examination of Emma Smith's revelation is provided in the section of this study concerning woman's ecclesiastical image in the early Church.

[3] Throughout this study the spelling, punctuation and grammar of the original speaker or writer will be maintained without comment in quoted materials so long as deviations from standard usage do not interfere with interpretation of the passage.

[4] The "Minutes" used for this study are a photocopy of a typescript that Susa Young Gates made of the holograph which Zina D. H. Young gave to the General Board of Relief Society. Both Sister Gates' typescript and the holograph were readily accessible on the open shelves of the Church History Department in Salt Lake City until the late 1970s. In addition, many photocopies of the more readable typescript were made and circulated among those interested in Mormon women's history. One such copy is in the author's possession. At the present time, both Gates' original typescript and the holograph are inaccessible to scholars. However, when the specific wording of a statement has proved critical to this study, the author has obtained the wording of the holograph from other researchers who had prior access to that document and kept photocopies or typescripts of the holograph in their own files.

[5] While Susa Gates' typescript reads "lead," the holograph reads "teach." However, "lead" is the verb that is most often quoted in discourse.

CHAPTER III

WOMAN'S IMAGE IN POLYGAMY DISCOURSE

Members of the early Mormon Church knew that the Old Testament promoted polygamy and the New Testament seemed to condone it. In contrast, the Book of Mormon denounced polygamy save in one short verse. In addition, most authoritative, public discourse until 1852 denied that the Church sanctioned the practice even though the first two prophets and their closest associates had plural wives during that period.

After August of 1852, the Church openly promoted polygamy, and the Doctrine and Covenants included the revelation on plural marriage as Section 132 of that text. Near the turn of the century, however, Church members were advised and then commanded to discontinue the practice. Currently, known polygamists are excommunicated; and little public Church discourse addresses the question. The following analysis of woman's image in Mormon polygamy will trace that evolution, beginning with the fundamental texts and with discourse from the early--or pre-Utah--Church.

The First Images

Early members of the Church were familiar with the practice of polygamy in the Old Testament. Nearly all of the preeminent patriarchs of that period had plural wives--the most noted being Sarai/Sarah, the wife of Abraham. The Lord called her "a mother of nations," as "kings of people shall be of her" (Gen. 2: 16-17). Other righteous plural wives also shared in their husbands' glory and were praised as they met the Old Testament standards of obedience, fecundity and beauty. Such women were treated with unusual respect, and their image was positive.

The New Testament does not promote plural marriage, and it does not prohibit the practice; neither Christ nor his apostles discussed the issue. Some Jews at that time, however, practiced polygamy, and apparently some early Christians, also. Paul wrote Titus that he should ordain as <u>elders</u> only those men who were "blameless" and the "husband of one wife" (Titus 1: 6). This directive suggests that some men had plural wives; but such marriages must not have offended Paul as he made no further criticism of either practitioner or practice.

By the time that Joseph Smith organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830, however, polygamy had been essentially abandoned in the major Western religions. The first new Mormon scripture, the <u>Book of Mormon</u>, also denounced the practice. "King Noah"

and "King Riplakish" are criticized for their wives and concubines (Mosiah 11: 14; Ether 10: 5). The Lord tells Jacob that, "David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines which thing was abominable before me." The Lord also says he is touched by the broken hearts and cries of the women, and the men of Jacob's tribe should have "one wife only" and "no concubines" (Jacob 2: 24, 26-27).

The foregoing is inconsistent with earlier scripture. In the Old Testament, the Lord claimed that David offended him only in the case of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. In the Book of Mormon, however, the Lord says that both David's and Solomon's polygamy were "abominable" to him; and the image of polygamous women is negative. Later in the same discourse from Jacob, however, the Lord says, "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; . . " (2: 30). Otherwise, such people were to "hearken" to different council. This single statement provides the only Book of Mormon sanction for polygamy.

For several years following the organization of the Church, all Mormon sermons promoted monogamy. This traditional posture is interesting because other new sects in the same area were experimenting with celibacy, complex marriage and spiritual wifery (Foster 11). However, the Mormons were both open and forceful in expressing their own policy; and the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants contained the following information:

> Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife and one woman but one husband, except in the case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. (Foster 137)

On 29 April 1837, the Seventies Quorum of the Melchizedek Priesthood declared that they would not "fellowship" any elder found "guilty of polygamy or any offense of the kind" (Foster 138). This statement was later printed in the June edition of the Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate (3: 511). And in November of 1837 and July of 1838, Joseph Smith also denied that Mormons believed in "having more wives than one" (Foster 138).

Lawrence Foster notes, however, that nine discourses currently accepted as revelations were given between 19 January 1841 and 12 July 1843 which provided the base for the introduction of plural marriage (142-144). In addition, Joseph Smith's sermons during this period frequently mentioned the ancient order of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the blessings of a large posterity promised the polygamist Abraham (DHC 4: 359; Terry and Terry 67).

In the autumn of 1842, a pamphlet titled The Peace Maker was circulated in Nauvoo which advocated a return to "Biblical" marriage to restore men to their rightful patriarchal roles, free them from the unnatural influence of one wife, and enable a husband to keep a not fully alienated wife at home. The monogamous woman appears

aggressive and disobedient in this pamphlet, the polygamous wife her opposite. And, while an unknown "Israelite" wrote the text, "J. Smith" was cited as printer.

In fact, the Prophet and several of his closest associates were quietly practicing polygamy at this time. In addition, roughly two dozen women were sealed (married by priesthood authority for "time and all eternity") to Smith before the revelation on plural marriage was recorded (Newell and Avery Mormon Enigma, p. 333). Then, on 12 July 1843, the Prophet dictated the revelation to his scribe, William Clayton. Church Patriarch Hyrum Smith read the document to the High Council; and the "secret" practice began to enlarge. Church leaders did not preach "the principle" of plural marriage nor sanction the practice in public, however, until August of 1852--nine years after the revelation was recorded.

The Revelation on Plural Marriage

The lengthy revelation contains few major points, and concludes with the promise that the Lord "will reveal more . . . hereafter" (D&C 132: 66).[1] The significant precepts include the following: The Prophet Joseph Smith has enormous power and God's support (45). The Prophet of the Church must officiate in and "seal," or make "everlasting," all earthly ordinances for them to remain valid in the resurrection (7). A "celestial marriage" is polygamous (30-33). Adultery is a grievous sin (41-42).

Emma Smith must accept the new covenant, and Joseph's existing plural wives, or be destroyed (52-55). Finally, all Church members must accept the new covenant or be damned (4-6).

"Destruction" and "damnation" in this sense need explanation. The revelation warns those who do not enter into celestial marriage that they will be celibate after death and denied eternal progression: After the resurrection, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are appointed angels in heaven" to "minister" as "servants" to more worthy beings (D&C 132: 16). Mormons also believe that damnation is a state of stasis or no progression--not everlasting physical torture.

In contrast, those married for time and eternity receive the following promises: They will come forth in the first or second resurrection. They may commit any sin except shedding innocent blood and still come forth in the first resurrection after Satan's buffetings. They shall inherit "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths," and shall have "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." Finally, "they shall be gods because they have no end . . . they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them" (D&C 132: 19-20).

The foregoing probably suggest more eternal satisfactions for Mormon women, and a more exalted image,

than the promises pronounced by other Judeo-Christian institutions. On the other hand, the revelation promises the Mormon man even greater privilege. In verse 64, the Lord says that if any man teaches his wife "the law of my Priesthood, as pertaining to these things; then shall she believe, and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed." The Lord continues, "It shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things, . ." (65). And the Lord concludes, "She then becomes the transgressor, and he is exempt from the law of Sarah" (65). Thus, the husband may receive "all things"--including plural wives; and the first wife can be circumvented.

Information concerning adultery in the text also sets women at a disadvantage. The Lord states that a man may espouse ten virgins; and if the first gives her consent, " . . . he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him" (D&C 132: 62). On the other hand, polyandry is equated with adultery with one possible exception. In verse 41 the Lord states,

> If a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery, and shall be destroyed.

In the foregoing verse, the clause "and I have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing" is problematic. It suggests that a married woman <u>can</u> be appointed by ordinance the opportunity of "being with another man." However, the question of double sealings for women in the

Church is nearly impossible to research and can be best pursued in Lawrence Foster's text, Religion and Sexuality. With the exception of the verse just cited, and perhaps also the 51st, in which Emma Smith is told not to "partake" of what she had been offered, the revelation consigns women to one spouse, only, while men have multiple options.

The penalties for adultery, as noted in the revelation, are also unequal. A wife found with another man has "committed adultery, and shall be destroyed" (D&C 132: 41). However, a man found with another woman, "and he was under a vow," hath "broken his vow, and hath committed adultery" (43). There is no talk of destruction for men in this revelation. In addition, the innocent wife of an adulterous man can be given by Joseph Smith to another, more virtuous man (44). Finally, the revelation concludes with reference to the "law" by which Abraham took Hagar to wife, and the directive to "let this suffice for the present" (66). This revelation was not generally accessible until the Deseret News published it in an 1852 "Extra" edition of the paper. Prior to that time, a few privileged members saw handwritten copies; but women generally could not study their sharply revised image as defined in the Lord's own words.

Introductory Discourse

The practice of plural marriage within the Mormon Church was essentially kept secret until 1852. Then, on 19 August, Apostle Orson Pratt addressed the issue in a special conference; and his comments indicate both his surprise over his assignment and the privacy that still surrounded the practice.

The Introductory Sermon

Early in his speech Pratt admitted, "It is quite unexpected to me, brethren and sisters to be called upon to address you this forenoon; and still more so, to address you upon the principle which has been named, namely, a plurality of wives" (JD 1: 53). Pratt continues, "It is rather new ground for me; that is, I have not been in the habit of publically speaking upon this subject . . . ; consequently, we shall have to break up new ground" (53-54). Pratt next contends that he will prove "to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives." Despite that stated intention, however, Pratt did not prove that the Church actually practiced polygamy. Instead, he argued for adoption.

For the purposes of this study, Pratt made the more useful choice because he justified practice. He said that Adam and Eve were married for eternity, and such was the marriage form of heaven. He cited the Lord's promise

that Abraham's seed would be as "numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore." But Pratt also noted that Hagar, Keturah, and "a plurality of wives and concubines" were needed so the promise could be fulfilled (JD 1: 60).

Pratt then contrasted monogamous men who debauched themselves in brothels with the moral polygamists in the rest of the world (JD 1: 61). He argued that God's "elect" spirits had been reserved for five or six thousand years to find homes in the last days among the Saints and not "among the Hottentots, the African negroes, the idolatrous Hindoos, or any other of the fallen nations" (63). And Pratt introduced Joseph Smith's revelation, after thirteen pages of argument, to conclude his dissertation.

The most persuasive images of polygamy reside in this final section. Pratt first observed that those who reject polygamy:

> . . . will be damned. . . . They have lost that exalted privilege forever; though they may, after having been punished for long periods escape by the skin of their teeth, but no kingdom will be conferred upon them. (JD 1: 64)

On the other hand, Pratt concluded that the Lord would exalt his obedient people to " . . . sit with Him upon thrones of power, to reign for ever and ever" (66). Thus polygamy images dignified women with the piety of obedience to God; the satisfaction of mothering select children; knowing that their husbands were not frequenting the "lowest haunts of degradation"; and the glory of ruling forever over kingdoms of their own.

Images in Orson Pratt's "Seer"

Four months after he introduced the subject in Salt Lake City, Apostle Orson Pratt began a year-long effort to defend polygamy in The Seer, a journal he published monthly in Washington, D.C. The twelve issues that promoted polygamy were read individually and later bound. In both forms, they were popular texts in Utah and throughout the Church missions. In addition, because Pratt was an apostle in the Church and an articulate apologist, his discourse is important.

Elder Pratt begins with a defense based on precedence. He notes that most of the House of Israel were polygamists; otherwise, how could the recorded 22,273 "first-born males" be delivered to 2,500,000 recorded Israelites? Apparently, each father had scores of sons, but only the first son of the first wife was a "first-born male" (109). Pratt also argues that most of the great men in the Old Testament were polygamists including such seldom-suspected practitioners as Adam and God. However, Pratt explains that Adam brought only one wife to this earth because "one was sufficient to commence the work of peopling this creation" (89).

In addition, Moses used the term "wife" instead of "wives" in his laws because in most cases, "the laws regulating one wife would be equally applicable to a plurality" (92). The choice of "regulating" reveals

Pratt's power structure; although he later admits some women achieve high status:

> We do have a heavenly Mother but should not worship her. The Father is the head of His household and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great head. (159)[2]

Pratt also cites precedence in the plural marriages of Jesus Christ: several women were always in his company; after the resurrection, he appeared first to some of them as a husband would to his "own dear wives" (159); the Psalmist wrote about the "wives of the Son of God," but the King James scholars corrupted that passage (160); Christ and his biographers all refer to the Son of God as "The Bridegroom"; and the Book of Revelations discusses the "marriage of the Lamb" (19: 6-9).[3] After the foregoing series of literal interpretations of the New Testament, Pratt concludes that he has proved both God and Christ polygamists; and he notes that they will "inherit their wives in eternity as well as in time" (169-172). If Pratt convinced his readers, polygamy was justified on the basis of the most divine practice.

Pratt also used Protestant tradition to justify plural marriage. He noted that Martin Luther permitted Phillip, the Landgrave of Hesse, to take a second wife in secret "for the sake of his health and his soul" (178-181). Pratt quoted Luther on another occasion as saying, "If the mistress refuse to come, let the maid be called" (181). And Pratt praised King Henry VIII who "laid

the foundation of the great and popular Church of England" and was "a polygamist" (181). That statement makes curious evidence. Few acclaim Henry's connubial ploys, and Mormon missionaries daily discredit the Anglican Church. However, Orson Pratt defied common sentiment to bolster his array of events.

Pratt also justified polygamy on current social grounds. He claimed that contrary to removing women's rights, polygamy enabled them to marry the man of their choice. Polygamy protected women against a life of prostitution, and it prevented men from having to take a mistress. The foregoing might appeal to spinsters of all ages and to social reformers as polygamous women appear to be "secure." In addition, Pratt concluded that polygamy was legal because the Constitution guaranteed religious freedoms. Thus, polygamous women were "ethical," as well.

On the other hand, The Seer lists plural marriage procedures which provide less attractive images. For example, the bride's lack of status is apparent in the procedure for entering marriage. First, the man must obtain consent of his own first wife. (Pratt later explains how this can be circumvented.) Next he asks the President of the Church and hopes for no unfavorable revelation on the matter. If none, he asks the parents of his intended; and then he asks the woman. In actual practice, these rules were both followed and ignored; but the degree to which they were followed is not known.

Pratt also describes a plural marriage ceremony: The first wife stands on the left of her husband with the bride-to-be on the left of the wife. The President then asks the wife:

> Are you willing to give this woman to your husband to be his lawful and wedded wife for time and for all eternity? If you are, you will manifest it by placing her right hand within the right hand of your husband.

After the right hands are joined, the first wife takes her husband by the left arm, in the posture of walking with him; and the President marries the new couple for time and eternity (31). Records indicate that these procedures, too, were both followed and ignored.

Finally Orson Pratt concludes his treatise with a set of formal rules for practice (174-176; 183-187.) In addition, scattered throughout the essays are random comments concerning the duties of plural wives. All of these injunctions are based on the allegedly incontrovertible assumptions that men are naturally superior to women, hold rightful authority over women, and have separate spheres of domain. Given those assumptions, the advice to the men seems fair.

Pratt says that a man desiring a plural marriage should first learn to govern himself. Next, he should choose his wives wisely to obtain women who are "kind," "amiable," "modest," "industrious," "virtuous," "honest," "truthful," "clean in person, apparel and kitchen," "patient," "stable," and pious. Missing from Pratt's list,

however, are such characteristics as "intelligent," "clever," "interesting," "ambitious," "wise," "strong," "resourceful," or similar terms which might suggest independence in goals or behavior for the woman, herself. However, Pratt's list is typical of those cultures in which men dominate the social institutions while women insure domestic support.

Apostle Pratt also provides a list of virtues for proper polygamous husbands: "sober," "meek," "wise," "prudent," "forbearing," "patient," "long-suffering," "merciful" and "compassionate." Except for the single term "merciful," the foregoing list could apply equally well to wives. That one word, however, indicates power in the husband's role that is not found with a subordinate wife. This claim is substantiated by Pratt's observation that the man should be "strict and unyielding" in the enforcement of all things calculated for the good of the family. In addition, he should "never allow himself to be moved right or left" from righteousness by either the smiles or tears of his wives or children (143). On the other hand, since the man was both the political and ecclesiastical head of the house, evaluations of "righteousness" would rest with him.

The most interesting directives to men reflect the special dynamics peculiar to plural marriage. Pratt advises men not to speak of one wife's faults to another; not to become biased against any wife because of the

accusations of the others; not to speak harshly to one wife in the hearing of another; and to keep each of the wives' secrets from all the others, and from anyone else, "unless in cases where good will result by doing otherwise" (174). All the foregoing suggest the potential for intrigue and polarization inherent in polygamous unions.

While Pratt began his list for men by advising them to govern themselves, he begins his list for women by cautioning that no woman should marry until she has "fully resolved to submit herself wholly to the man's counsel, and to let him govern as the head" (175). Pratt also advises women not to try to prejudice their husbands against any of the other wives; and if one wants to rise in favor and influence she should display her own merits, and not magnify the faults of others. The apostle also tells women not to speak evil of the husband to any of the rest of the family, and to support his decisions and discipline regardless of her own preferences (175). In the foregoing, the threats of competition and absolute male authority pierce the "security" of the polygamous woman's image.

Pratt also states that there is "no particular rule" regarding how a man should house his several families (41). And he concludes that when a widow marries a widower, and each desires to have his or her former partner in the next world, then the children of the couple

sealed "for time only" would go with their mother after the resurrection, because a woman can have only a limited number of children (142). With the exception of that item, however, the rest of Pratt's instructions put polygamous men at greater advantage than their wives and thus reduce the woman's dignity.

Pratt advises men to treat all wives impartially, if they are "equally faithful" (41), thus providing an excuse for favoritism. Pratt also observes that a man may circumvent his first wife to enter polygamy: He says that if a man teaches his first wife "the principle," she should accept it or tell the President of the Church why she does not. If she has a good reason, such as a transgressing husband, then she is justified. But if the President decides that her reasons are insufficient, then the man has the right to take another wife: "He will be justified, and she will be condemned, because she did not give them unto him" (41). The weight of male power in such interactions might deter a timid first wife from a contest.

Apostle Pratt also noted that women could not have more than one husband at a time, because such practice "would not facilitate the increase of posterity" (60), and because the woman "could not serve two masters" (154). And he said,

> By the sacred covenant of marriage, the woman freely and voluntarily gives herself to the husband; she no longer is her own, neither does she belong to her

> parents or to any one else; she has surrendered herself wholly to her husband. (90)

In the foregoing, the woman has no autonomy. She cannot "own" herself, but must belong to someone in higher authority.

Finally, Pratt includes in his policies for plural wives the following proscription:

> The wife should never follow her own judgment in preference to that of her husband; for if her husband desires to do right, but errs in judgment, the Lord will bless her in endeavoring to carry out his counsels; for God has placed him at the head, and though he may err in judgment, yet God will not justify the wife in disregarding his instructions and counsels; for greater is the sin of rebellion, than the errors which arise for the want of judgment . . . . (143-144)

The foregoing reflects a significant tension within Mormon culture between "free agency" and "obedience." Such issues can range from discrepancies between orthodox and personal interpretations of high level doctrine to just such domestic issues as differences between a husband's "authoritative inspiration" and his wife's beliefs or "intuitions," which she might feel are also inspired by the Holy Ghost. Subsequent chapters of this study will demonstrate that <u>most</u> authoritative Church discourse recommends resolutions based on institutional interpretations and male authority.

<u>Early Sermons and Women's Private Response</u>

Although the Sisters had no forum of their own, the men's early sermons on polygamy reflect some women's

reactions. For example, in October of 1855 Counselor Heber C. Kimball denied the validity of "some sisters'" revelations that after the resurrection every woman would "have a husband to herself" (JD 3: 125). And on a later occasion, Counselor Jedediah M. Grant complained:

> We have women here who like anything but the celestial law of God; and if they could break asunder the cable of the Church of Christ, there is scarcely a mother in Israel but would do it this day. And they talk it to their husbands, to their daughters, and to their neighbors, and say that they have not seen a week's happiness since they became acquainted with that law, or since their husbands took a second wife. They want to break up the Church of God. (JD 4: 50)

That same day, President Brigham Young promised every discontented polygamous wife her liberty:

> Now go your way, my women with the rest, . . . my wives have got to round up their shoulders . . . , and live their religion, or they may leave, for I will not have them about me. I will go to heaven alone, rather than have scratching and fighting around me. (JD 4: 55)

Young released "even" his "first wife," gave the women custody of the children, and continued:

> Sisters, I am not joking. . . . There is no cessation to the everlasting whining of many of the women in this Territory . . . . Two weeks from to-morrow . . . , if you will tarry with your husbands, after I have set you free, you must bow down to it, and submit yourselves to the celestial law. You may go where you please, after two weeks from to-morrow; but remember, that I will not hear any more of this whining. (JD 4: 57)

Two weeks later Young reneged somewhat as he said that women wanting release would have to appear at his office, justify their desires, and then marry a monogamous Mormon man (Woodruff Diary, 6 October 1856).

The significance of the foregoing is the men's public admission that a large enough number of women complained about plural marriage to provoke official response. On the other hand, Stanley S. Ivins suggests that Mormon men, too, rejected the doctrine:

> There may have been a time when fifteen, or possibly twenty, per cent of the Mormon families of Utah were polygamous. This leaves the great majority of the Saints delinquent in their obligation to the principle of plurality of wives. (230)

Ivins' statistics are among the most generous; yet they suggest that for over half a century relatively few adult males heeded counsel. However, Church leaders typically exhorted either the membership at large, or criticized the Sisters for rebellion.

As late as 1874, Brigham Young reminded a congregation that a woman could not dictate to her husband " . . . who or how many he shall take, or what he shall do with them when he gets them, but it is the duty of the woman to submit cheerfully." To be fair, Young also admitted that some Sisters were married to unjust men who mistreated them. Even so, however, it was not the woman's "prerogative to correct the evil, she must bear that . . . ." Young also noted that if the woman were patient, she would be "crowned" with another man "far above" her first husband in the celestial kingdom (JD 17: 159-160).

The foregoing negative images of submission and unhappiness are found in much public discourse. On the other hand, as noted earlier, Church leaders also promised

polygamous women great blessings. In 1857 Apostle Orson Pratt observed that, "If a good man is entitled to a kingdom of glory--to a reward and crown, and has the privilege of swaying a sceptre in the eternal world, a good woman is entitled to the same" (JD 6: 360). Brigham Young said that the faithful would enjoy "All the cheerfulness, gladness, comfort, exuberance of spirit, joy, bliss, peace and brightness of expression that can be bestowed upon individuals . . . in heaven" (JD 9: 323). And he promised women "millions of children" as they would become "mothers of nations" and "Eves to earths like this" (JD 8: 208).

The Necessity of Polygamy

Some members of the Church have contended that polygamy was never commanded but only advised. For example, in 1927 the Young Woman's Journal claimed that, "During the days of its greatest popularity . . . never more than four percent of the people lived it. Its practice was permitted but never made obligatory" (38: 803). In contrast, most sermons on the subject indicate that the Lord commanded all worthy and capable members to enter "the principle."

In 1872 President Brigham Young assured a congregation that any who "renounced" or "disbelieved" the doctrine of plural marriage would "be damned. I promise you that, no matter who it is" (JD 15: 133). In 1865 the Millennial Star asserted that polygamy could not be

"yielded, and faith in the system remain" (MS 27: 673). And a year later President Young prophesied that, "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. Others attain unto a glory . . . but they cannot reign as kings" (JD 11: 269).

In 1874 Apostle Orson Pratt claimed that, "A person might as well say, 'I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, but do not believe in him'" as to say, "'I believe in Mormonism, . . . and do not believe in polygamy." Pratt concluded that, "The Lord has said that those who reject this principle reject their salvation, they shall be damned" (JD 17: 224). And Apostle Joseph F. Smith argued in 1878 as follows, "Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation of mankind." But Smith also said, "I want here to enter my solemn protest against this idea. For I know it is false." Smith concluded:

> I understand the law of celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness, and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that. (JD 20: 28-31)

Clearly, the foregoing add a "mandatory" dimension to the polygamous woman's image.

Gentile Images of Polygamy and the Sisters' Public Response

Several factors correlate with image changes in the polygamy discourse. Increasing numbers of Gentiles

moved into the Great Basin in the second half of the century, and many opposed plural marriage. Federal legislation defined polygamists as felons; the Government punished both individuals and the entire Mormon Church; and the anti-Mormon press created their own scurrilous images. On the other hand, a second generation of polygamists matured and added a dimension of conventionality to the practice.

In response to population change and increased criticism, Church leaders after the Civil War tried to defend polygamy to nonbelievers as well as to the Mormons. The theological claims based on recent revelation and Biblical precedent were therefore augmented by warrants of social benefits and constitutionality. For example, Brigham Young promoted polygamy as a morality guarantee:

> It is a very different matter elsewhere; women are seduced and secretly kept as mistresses . . . . They are cast off to meet, if it were possible, a worse fate; their children are not acknowledged, but thrown upon the world unprotected, and left exposed to be carried away by the dark and turpid stream of crime, to end their wretched lives in prison, upon the gallows, or in some other violent manner. (JD 9: 331)

A year later, Young claimed that polygamy "will work out the moral salvation of the world" by forcing all men to "take more than one wife . . . and do what is right towards the females" (JD 12: 261-262). George Q. Cannon boasted that polygamous Mormon men felt unprecedented happiness; and their "wives never felt so free in their lives as they do to-day" (JD 11: 337). The men also noted

that Mormon families were healthier, more industrious, and more cohesive than other families.

On the other hand, Gail Farr Casterline contends that while a few Gentile responses to polygamy were positive, most formal discourse concluded that the system was at best undemocratic and repressive towards the Sisters. According to Casterline, at least fifty, full-length novels sensationalized polygamy as "vice," "misery," "heartbreak" and "horror." Writers depicted the polygamous wife as anything from a "weak-willed dupe" to a "slave," a "depraved" being or "half savage." Women were described as victims of whippings and suicides. Some tried to escape in blizzards. One account depicts Brigham Young driving fifty sweating wives across the desert from his litter chair (Casterline 50). Mutant children were said to be common. In addition, illustrations show such scenes as women roped to a plow, plural wives physically battling each other, and Eliza Snow forcing a bride into marriage at knife point.

Emmeline B. Wells, Editor of the Woman's Exponent and a noted Mormon woman, described the postwar climate as one in which "unfriendly comments" and "gross misrepresentations" became

> so fierce and so frequent that some new means of defense seemed a positive necessity, . . . The establishment of a woman's paper was decided upon, by which they might represent themselves and defend the principles and doctrines of their faith. (YWJ 3: 97-98)

Thus the Woman's Exponent was established to provide female apologists a platform.

On the surface, Exponent articles and editorials seemed to repeat the men's earlier warrants. For example, Wells contended that polygamy produced honorable behavior, while monogamy provoked sin and corruption. She also observed that plural marriage was consistent with natural law and provided health for its practitioners and their descendents. The Exponent consistently noted how polygamy prevented spinsterhood, an extended widowhood and prostitution because every Mormon woman could have a righteous husband of her own. And the publication observed that the Constitution guaranteed the separation of church and state and the right to religious expression.

Exponent defenses are most interesting, however, when they manifest a unique perspective. For example, in 1879 the publication claimed that plural marriage provided woman with "the beginning of her freedom" and "the door of her emancipation from slavery to man" (1 Jan., p. 117). The journal also noted that polygamy gave women more freedom to live their own lives and devote themselves to their own interests.

Generally, Mormon men did not develop the foregoing arguments. In addition, the Sisters claimed that rather than subjecting women to slavery, polygamy provided "more time for thought, for mental culture, more freedom of action, a broader field of labor, inculcates liberality

and generosity . . . fosters purity of thought and gives wider scope to benevolence" (WE 15 Aug. 1876, p. 44). The Exponent also said that plural marriage "does not narrow but widens woman's field for usefulness" (15 Aug. 1877, p. 44). Such claims reflect the possibility of sharing or assigning different aspects of housework and child care among the plural wives so each woman had more free time.

The Saints also believed that plural marriage would redeem women from Eve's "curse." In 1884, the Woman's Exponent explained that "through this principle of plural marriage woman will eventually be redeemed from the curse placed upon her, and this is worth all the sacrifices it is possible to make" (1 June, p. 4). Interestingly, Joseph Smith had asserted that "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgressions." This significant denial of original sin was written in a letter to John Wentworth in 1842 but was not widely known until the "Articles of Faith" were published in the early twentieth century. Thus most Mormons of both sexes believed that woman suffered from Eve's fall. On the other hand, polygamy would cure woman's "natural" jealousy; and if such occurred, the Sisters might earn complete equality with men.

The significance of Exponent defenses is the Sisters' creation of an attractive image of the polygamous Mormon woman. She was happy, free to pursue personal interests, secure in her righteous marriage, the mother of

a healthy family, and on the verge of equality with man. In addition, the Sisters' writing depicted them as independent and articulate while their motivation appeared moral and lawful. In contrast, the Poland Bill, Edmunds Bill, and Edmunds-Tucker Act defined polygamy as illegal and ultimately enabled the Federal Government to pursue the Mormon "felons." To counter these additional threats, Mormon women met in large gatherings to defend polygamy and their own franchise.

On 6 March 1886, nearly two thousand Utah women met in Salt Lake City in one of a series of mass meetings. There, they presented thirteen addresses, two poems, one statement of resolutions and two prayers addressing the questions of woman suffrage and Mormon persecution. Nine other speeches were written but not delivered, and nine letters of support were received. Interestingly, this 1886 "Mormon Women's Protest" is also representative of much of women's discourse of the period.

For example, in the delivered speeches the women describe themselves as "pure," "delicate," "noble," "innocent," "modest," "sensitive," "tender," "patient," "virtuous," "chaste," and villainously mistreated. As an example of this "persecuted" image, Dr. Romania Pratt described how polygamous women had been abused by marshalls and sheriffs:

> Chaste and honorable women have been taken alone into a room with fifteen men and been baited and badgered by prosecuting officers and forced, on pain of imprisonment, to answer the most insulting and

> indecent questions concerning their personal condition, their expected maternity, and their private relations with their husbands. (Protest, p. 32)

On the other hand, those speeches and letters which were not presented to the audience describe women as "strong," and quite "capable" of managing their difficult situation. Thus, as was typical of most women's discourse, the Sisters publically defined themselves to meet existing stereotypes, but showed greater strength in a private set of messages. The meeting concluded with appeals to the Boston women's suffrage movement and to all American wives and mothers to support the Mormon women's cause. Ironically, Gentile women tried to save the Sisters by battling polygamy.

The Demise of Plural Marriage

The change finally came from within, however. In 1890, Church President Wilford Woodruff issued a "Manifesto" in which he said: "I now publically declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land" (MFP 3: 195). And while the Church approved some additional plural marriages outside of the United States, and the intent of Federal legislation was not fully met, successive Church Presidents have denounced polygamy in increasingly harsh terms.

In 1904, a document informally called the "Second Manifesto" was issued by President Joseph F. Smith.

President Heber J. Grant later warned Church members that polygamists would be found guilty of immoral conduct and "cut off" from the Church (MFP 5: 292-295; CR April 1921, p. 201). In 1931 President Grant admitted that some practice persisted but added, "So far as God gives me power to give His word to the people," monogamy is the "word of the Lord" (CR April 1931, p. 8). That section of the Conference Reports was titled "Absolutely Forbidden." In 1947 President George Albert Smith said that the Church did not "condone" polygamy. However, after the "raid" on polygamists living in Short Creek, Arizona, little public attention has been paid to the issue in authoritative Church discourse. And while dozens of Mormon splinter-sects continue the practice, the contemporary woman's polygamous image within the Utah Mormon Church has again grown unattractive.

Some members of the Church saw this reversal as God's promised reward for righteousness, but others interpreted the event as punishment. Susa Young Gates, one of the most prestigeous Mormon women of her day, blamed the Sisters in particular for the Church's loss. In the March 1893 edition of the Young Woman's Journal, Editor Gates concluded that the women's public and private rejection of plural marriage caused God to withdraw its blessings from the Church. And because women after 1872 were impressive public apologists, Gates' assertion is provocative.

Editor Gates first observed that the Mormons did not offend the nation in plural marriage so much as the members' resistance to "the principle" offended God. Gates also claimed that the members' rebelliousness so weakened the Church, that the "mighty spirit was not able to help us as we might have wished" (YWJ 4: 276-278). But her indictment of the women is most severe:

> I say in all sad frankness that we, the women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have a grievous sin to answer for in that we have too many of us treated this sacred and holy principle with neglect, sneers, mocking, abuse and even cursing and railing. . . . Sisters, I stand appalled at the magnitude of my sin and yours! (278)

Because of her family connections and Church opportunities, Susa Y. Gates should have had reliable information and drawn reasonable conclusions. Thus, a powerful Mormon woman supported an observation made forty years earlier by her father, Brigham Young, when he threatened to set complainers free: In general, woman's image in Mormon polygamy was unattractive to the Sisters.

Summary: Polygamy Images

Authoritative discourse concerning plural marriage exhibits an interesting tension between threats and blessings for the polygamous Mormon woman. The Sisters were jeopardized both from without and within the Church by the practice. Deterrents included the fact that all recent tradition demanded monogamy, and early Mormon women were required to make profound revisions in their belief

systems to accept polygamy. In addition, Gentile hostility and Federal intervention created increasing hardship for practitioners.

On the other hand, ancient precedent, God's recent commandment, mortal and eternal advantages justified the practice and, in some cases, dignified polygamous women. Initially, as self-proclaimed Israelites, the Mormons honored the great patriarchs of the Old Testament and praised their plural wives for obedience. Later, God commanded the Mormons to reinstitute the "fullness of the gospel" including plural marriage. Smith's modern revelation warned those who rejected polygamy that they could not receive the highest blessings of eternal life but would be celibate servants to more righteous souls. On the other hand, polygamists were promised an early resurrection in addition to association with God and Christ throughout the eternities and worlds of their own to populate and rule.

Mortal advantages were also justification: Polygamous wives were promised that their husbands would be of their own choice and faithful, and their children would be those "select spirits" reserved by God to "come forth in the latter days." Polygamy made women "secure" as it allegedly obviated prostitution and loneliness at all ages. It was also said to be healthy and normal as the middle-class stereotype for men was "highly sexed" while the ideal for women was "pure" and above such baseness. In

addition, polygamous women themselves claimed that they were happy and their constitutionally-guaranteed marriages allowed them to develop their talents, pursue personal interests, enlarge their sphere of service, increase their spiritual growth, and ultimately attain equality with man.

On the other hand, authoritative discourse also reveals gender-based inequities. The revelation commanding the practice gives men greater opportunities and power and fewer punishments than the women.[5] In addition, subsequent discourse discloses an "insecure" dimension for women as competition, intrigue and absolute submission to male dominance threaten woman's autonomy and honor. Finally, continued exhortation and chastisement by Church leaders for nearly fifty years, and the best available statistics, suggest that most Mormons "voted with their feet" against the practice (Arrington and Bitton 203). Brigham Young and Susa Gates blamed Mormon women in particular for failure.

Notes

[1] The 132nd Section of the Doctrine and Covenants constitutes the entire text of the revelation on celestial marriage. Variations between that version and the version printed in the 1852 Deseret News are insignificant and need not be addressed in this study.

[2] The Mormon Church fully subscribes to the concept of a mother in heaven; but she is almost never mentioned, and no information or commonly held image surrounds her. Instead, the most frequent reference to this exalted woman comes in the singing of a popular song titled, "O My Father."

[3] Other prominent Church leaders, including Counselor Jedediah M. Grant and Apostle Orson Hyde, also contended that Christ was a polygamist. See the Journal of Discourses 1: 345; 2: 81; and 4: 259-260.

[4] Church President Brigham Young cited this same occurrence in a sermon in 1865. See the Journal of Discourses 11: 127.

[5] Other discourse on the subject threatens men with severe punishment, but typically accuses women, not men, of initiating the extramarital relationship.

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN'S ECCLESIASTICAL IMAGE

While the practice of polygamy most distinguished the Sisters' domestic image during the first one hundred years of Church history, women's gifts of the spirit and autonomy in the Relief Society most distinguished the Sisters' ecclesiastical image during the same period. Currently, however, Mormon women exercise fewer ecclesiastical powers and their adult Society is less autonomous than at any period of active operation.

On the other hand, Mormon women currently have numerous opportunities to function in church settings. Most active Sisters teach an auxiliary class and visit several homes once a month in a "visiting-teaching" capacity. In addition, women can serve on ward, stake or "general" levels in the presidencies of the Relief Society, the Young Woman's Mutual Improvement Association, and the Primary Association--auxiliaries serving the adult women, teenage girls, and children of the Church. Women may also sing with, direct or accompany choirs; provide secretarial services; operate small libraries; do genealogical research; perform ordinance work for the dead;[1] serve full- or part-time missions; contribute to

welfare projects of all kinds; work in various youth camps and special programs; speak in church meetings; and support local or regional activities by providing food or other services. Although men fill all the highest level offices, and hold final authority, opportunities for women's involvement are unending.

Of those opportunities, this study will examine the Mormon woman's Relief Society image because that Society is the oldest and largest women's auxiliary, and because it established many significant precedents. In addition, because the Mormon missionary system is one of the most successful of all Christian missions, and because the Church is currently distinguished by its intensive proselyting activity, women's image as missionaries will be considered. This chapter will also analyze discourse concerning the Sisters' experience with the gifts of the spirit--a significant early practice. However, because women's ecclesiastical experience becomes more meaningful against the backdrop of Church structure and priesthood office, those aspects of Mormonism will be considered first.

Church Structure and Male Priesthood

The Mormon Church is currently divided into geographic and membership units which include "wards"--local "parishes" averaging four hundred members; "stakes"--collections averaging eight to ten wards; and "regions"--collections of several stakes or an area marked by

obvious geographic boundaries. In September of 1984, the Church also had 181 missions in the free world which contained thousands of small, local "branches." Each of the foregoing is presided over by "ward bishoprics," "branch presidencies," "stake presidencies," "stake high councils," "mission presidents" and their assistants, and "regional representatives"--all men who bear the "Melchizedek Priesthood."

In addition, the "General Officers" of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, the Sunday School, the Church Education System, the Missionary Department, the Historical Department, the Welfare System, and all other departments which serve the general membership are headed by men holding the Melchizedek Priesthood. And, as noted earlier, many other "presiding officers" (for example, the Presiding Bishopric), and all General Authorities of the Church hold the same authority. Thus, some understanding of priesthood office is useful.

When Joseph Smith organized the Church, he also claimed to restore two ancient priesthoods which permit their members to act for God, and with godlike powers, on earth. All worthy adult males receive the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood; but only the President/Prophet of the Church and top-ranking General Authorities can "hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church," receive "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and "commune with God and Jesus Christ" (D&C 107: 18-19). In

practice, roughly sixteen men including the President, his counselors, the members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostle and the Church Patriarch can act as prophets, seers and revelators in the fullest sense of those words (Arrington and Bitton 291).

On the other hand, all the foregoing administrators, from bishops to the highest presidents, have authority to receive inspiration for those under their jurisdiction, assign duties and officially judge behavior. In addition, Melchizedek Priesthood bearers can serve as temple presidents while select others officiate in the general temple ordinances and some perform civil marriages. However, all worthy members of the Melchizedek Priesthood are eligible to officiate in Church rituals at the local level and exercise the gifts of the spirit.

In addition, all worthy young men over the age of twelve are eligible to hold the Aaronic, or lesser, Priesthood; and most young male members are deemed worthy. These priesthood bearers have authority to baptize, to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper, to visit and counsel with Church members, and to assume authority when no man holding a higher priesthood is present. Thus, members of the two priesthoods hold all the general administrative offices, perform the vital ordinances, and direct the organized spiritual activities of the Church. Apostle John A. Widtsoe summarized the foregoing when he

claimed that "the Church is a product of the priesthood . . . " (IE Jan. 1948, p. 33).

In a similar vein, in 1899 Elder Marriner W. Merrill explained the importance of following "God's Servants":

> . . . there is no other way whereby we may be saved; there is no other way whereby we may be exalted; there is no other way whereby we may obtain eternal life. We must yield to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit; we must yield to the counsels of the Priesthood. (CR Apr. 1899, p. 16)

As previously noted, such "servants" range from the highest to the lowest of ordained men.

In 1952, Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency claimed that every priesthood bearer was:

> . . . a teacher and preacher of the word of God; whether or not he be called to a special position, his diocese is as large as his circle of family, friends, and acquaintances, and he is under obligation to teach to them the revealed truth. (CR Oct. 1952, p. 99)

On the other hand, men actually "called" to missions are promised that they "shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost"; and whatsoever they speak under those conditions "shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (D&C 68: 2-4).

In 1970, Apostle Mark E. Peterson described "The Blessings and Power of the Priesthood" in the home:

> . . . the priesthood in the home, properly regarded, has a sanctifying influence. . . . Where the priesthood is properly understood and honored and

> where its influence abounds, there will be no family quarrels, no disrupted homes, no deception, no infidelity, and no divorce. . . . Sisters, encourage your husbands to preside with dignity in your homes. Recognize them as the priestly presidents of the family. (RSMag 57: 9)

In 1964, Relief Society Magazine readers learned that:

> Church government should provide the direction for the activity of Church members. Every phase of life from birth to death, including the daily routine of making a living or solving the problems of society, should be included. (51: 475)

And in 1970, N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency claimed that even boys "12 years of age or older" who held the Aaronic Priesthood could provide "strength and counsel and direction" to their sisters (IE June 1970, p. 63).

Not only do priesthood bearers have expansive jurisdiction and extensive power, but they command great respect as well. Most members believe that priesthood authority is infallible if the priesthood holder is living righteously and magnifying his office. Apostle Melvin J. Ballard observed that even though a bishop might be less well educated or less successful than a member seeking counsel, "he is able to give you the right counsel and advice, and he will never direct you wrong" (CR Oct. 1922, p. 57). Apostle Bruce R. McConkie claimed the same for the principle Church leaders:

> . . . as a people, as a Church, we will never be led astray; and . . . as individuals, we will never go out of the course of righteousness that the Lord expects us to be in as long as we hearken to the counsel of the Presidency and the Twelve who head the kingdom. (CR Oct. 1947, p. 61)

Elder Marion G. Romney concurred:

> . . . what the presidency say as a presidency is what the Lord would say if he were here, and it is scripture. It should be studied, understood and followed, even as the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and other scriptures. (CR Apr. 1945, p. 90)

Romney concluded that such directives need not be stated as revelations nor be accompanied by the statement "Thus saith the Lord" to be binding. Apostle Ezra Taft Benson agreed in 1980: "The Prophet does not have to say 'Thus saith the Lord' to give us scripture." And Benson also claimed that the prophet speaks for the Lord "in everything" including civic matters. Benson said that the prophet's mind is not limited by human reasoning; he will never lead the Church astray; and the living prophet is more important than previous prophets and more "vital" than the Mormon scriptures (Brigham Young University Today, April 1980, n. pag.).

Finally, members have also been told that, "It is a serious thing . . . to raise a voice against the priesthood, or to hold the priesthood in disrespect: for the Lord will not hold such guiltless" (CR Oct. 1910, p. 39). And women read that the Church is the only true religious organization; and they have seen "the perfect manner in which it operates" and the "influence of the Holy Ghost" on Church leaders (RSMag 54: 708-709). In comparison, contemporary women's office and authority are modest. Earlier churchwomen, however, had other experience.

Mormon Women and the Gifts of the Spirit

According to the New Testament, Christ promised his followers wonderful gifts of the spirit to comfort them in his absence:

> These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16: 17-18)

Early Christians employed these gifts, but the practice generally waned in the Protestant churches.

Members of the Mormon Church, however, have additional documents which repeat Christ's promise. In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni notes that God gives "many" gifts "to profit" his children including the abilities to have faith, to heal, to work miracles, to prophesy, to behold angels, to speak in tongues and to interpret tongues.[2] Moroni concludes that "all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will" (Moroni 10: 8-17; emphasis added). Moroni also said, "I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God" (10: 8).

In addition, on 8 March 1831, Joseph Smith received a revelation "given unto the church" to benefit those who loved the Lord. Some members were to receive one spiritual gift, some another, and some all the gifts including the abilities to know Christ is divine, faith to be healed, faith to heal, faith to work miracles, ability

to prophesy, discern spirits, speak in tongues and interpret tongues (D&C 46: 10-25). This revelation notes that bishops and certain ordained elders will be able to discern "all those gifts lest there shall be any . . . professing and yet not be of God" (27).

While members of the nineteenth century Mormon Church were promised diverse gifts of the spirit, they most often healed the sick, prophesied, blessed others and spoke in tongues. However, as noted earlier, only the Prophet of the Church was to receive revelations or prophesy in behalf of the entire Church.[3] From about the turn of the century until the present, however, Mormon women have been counseled to abandon their practice of ministrations for healing, prophesying, blessing, and speaking in tongues. At the same time, Mormon men have been encouraged to manifest their spiritual gifts as they magnify their priesthood powers. Thus significant policies have been revised along gender lines, and the following analysis will trace some of that change.

The Sisters Speak in Tongues

According to the Woman's Exponent, on 24 October 1833, Joseph Smith promised a small gathering, "If one of you will rise up and open your mouth it shall be filled, and you shall speak in tongues." Many looked at Lydia Bailey, and:

> She was enveloped as with a flame, and unable longer to retain her seat, she arose and her mouth was filled with the praises of God and His glory. The

> spirit of tongues was upon her, and she was clothed in a shining light, so bright that all present saw it with great distinctness above the light of the fire and the candles. (qtd. Pearson 13).

Smith apparently approved Sister Lydia's action; but that year he also warned, "The devil will take advantage of the innocent and unwary." In addition, Smith said that no prophecy spoken in tongues should be made public, but any exhortation or principle of doctrine thus received could be used for the edification of the membership (Teachings of the Prophet, p. 25). Nine years later, however, the Prophet told the Relief Society that nothing taught by the gift of tongues was to be "received for doctrine"; but they might speak in tongues for their own "comfort" ("Minutes," p. 22).

No one knows what percentage of the Church actually spoke in tongues, but some women seemed active practitioners. For example, Zina D. H. Jacobs recorded frequent instances in her "Nauvoo Diary"; and while this document was not public discourse, subsequent publication makes the events noted common knowledge and contributes to an understanding of the period. The following items from 1845 suggest the pleasure that practitioners received. On 3 February 1845, Zina noted, "William and wife ware here in the evening. He spoke and sung in tongs." And she said, "It was excellent." February 8--"Father called in in the evening, spoke in tongs." April 1--"Father Huntington came in in the evening. He spake in tongs. Henry also Sung in tungs. It was very good. I interpreted the talk by the

help of the speret of God." And she had "an agreeable viset" (Beecher 285-320).

In addition to concentrated activity on the part of specific women, the practice increased generally during times of greatest stress or rejoicing. When the Kirtland Temple was completed, Prescinda Huntington noted that at one Sacrament meeting a Brother McCarter rose "and sang a song of Zion in tongues." She continues: "I arose and sang simultaneously with him the same tune and words, beginning and ending each verse in perfect unison, without varying a word. It was just as though we had sung it together a thousand times" (Tullidge 209).

In addition, Mary Fielding described a meeting in the temple:

> Some of the Sisters while engaged in conversing in toungues their countenances beaming with joy, clasped each other's hands . . . in the most affectinate manner. . . . A brite light shone across the house and rested upon some of the congregation. (Women's Voices, p. 61)

And Eliza R. Snow noted that speaking in tongues during this period was such a common practice that it was finally restricted to the last hour of the Thursday fast meetings.

After the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was organized in March of 1842, minutes of those meetings record additional practice. At the fifth meeting Counselor Sarah Cleveland said that she had many feelings she could not express in ordinary words and so wished to speak in the gift of tongues. This she did "in a powerful manner"; and Sister Patty Sessions interpreted as follows: God was

pleased with the Society, and "if the members remained humble and faithful, the Lord would pour out upon the members generously the gift of prophecy . . ." ("Minutes," p. 17).

At the next meeting, however, Joseph Smith warned the women to use the gift essentially for their own "comfort"; and after that time, little public discourse records their practice. On the other hand, women did speak in tongues in private or in small informal gatherings; and speaking in tongues was a feature of many meetings held in Winter Quarters, Iowa. In addition, the women's journals and trail diaries record continued practice; and as these documents were published, private experience became public information.

The following are condensations from Eliza Snow's diary written in Winter Quarters: 1 June--had a "spiritual feast." 2 June--two separate small meetings in which women spoke and sang in tongues. 3 June--"a pow'rful time--deep things were brought forth." 6 June--"a glorious time." 7 June--"Mother Butler" received the gift of tongues at one of two separate meetings. 9 June--"Margaret, Martha, Loisa, Susan and Lucy received the gift of tongues" and all "had a glorious time." On 10 June, ten women received the gift; and on 11 June, three others (Pearson 17-18).

Patty Sessions' journal records similar kinds of experience: Tuesday, 30 March 1847, "We prayed, spoke in tongues, interpreted and prophesied and had a good visit."

13 April, "Had a good time, spoke in tongues, prophecied, and the spirit of the Lord was with us." 1 May, "We had a good meeting. I presided. It was got by E. R. Snow. They spoke in tongues. I interpreted and some prophecied" (Pearson 71). According to Sessions, both adult women and young girls acquired the gift; and the practice persisted after the pioneers entered the Great Salt Lake Valley.

After that arrival, Eliza Snow wrote of a meeting held 2 November 1847 of the "mothers in Israel" in which Ellen "spoke in the gift of tongues--It was a rich treat." On 4 November, Sister Snow presided over a meeting of the "young ladies." And on 7 November, she reported a "delightful" meeting of the "little girls" (actually adult women):

> Susan N. and Martha receiv'd the gift of tongues. Sarah H. improv'd upon hers which she spoke in yes. here for the first time--after meet Sis. Chase blest C. & me. Clara spoke in tongues & blessed us. Praise the Lord, O my soul! (IE Feb., 1944, p. 152)

In addition to noting the frequency of the foregoing occurrences, it is also important to recognize the pleasure and power that women derived from their gift.

The Sisters quoted above were the most prominent and influential women in the Church. Patty Sessions was a popular Mormon midwife who knew most of the women pioneers. Eliza Snow was married first to Joseph Smith and then to Brigham Young, was celebrated as Zion's poetess, was president of all the auxiliaries staffed by women until 1880, and then was President of the Relief Society

until her death. She and Zina Young were also called "leading Priestesses" of the Church by many of the Sisters. Zina, too, was married to Joseph Smith and then to Brigham Young; and she was the third general President of the Relief Society until her death. All these women continued to speak in tongues throughout their lifetimes; and they taught, or promised, the gift to other women.

Early English converts also spoke in tongues. The 1 January 1849 issue of the Millennial Star quotes Sarah Brown of England as follows: "The gifts of tongues and of interpretation are also common amongst us, as well as that of seeing visions, dreaming dreams, and of prophecy" (11: 6). And in June of that same year, the Star notes that after receiving a blessing, "Sister Petty began to sing in tongues and prophesy" (11: 190).

In pioneer Utah, women occasionally spoke in formal Church meetings. "Sister Bybee" spoke in tongues at the dedication of the small Salt Lake tabernacle; and President Young declared her utterance to be a "proper tongue" (MS 14: 356). However, most women exercised their gifts in private gatherings; and some male leaders became concerned. In 1857, Counselor Heber C. Kimball complained about the "little circles of women" that got together in the city:

> We can tell you what will come to pass; and one of you can talk in tongues and pour out your souls to God, and then one interpret; and that is the course you take, and it is all right: go ahead, and God bless you and multiply blessings on you; but do not

> against the Priesthood you are connected to. (JD 5: 176-177)

In the foregoing, Counselor Kimball is not so much opposed to the women's speaking in tongues as to an inappropriate focus and attitude. Contrary to Kimball's observation, however, published journals indicate that most of the women's practice was positive rather than threatening or offensive. Most utterances delivered in tongues described celestial glories, promised blessings of health or long life, or blessed the recipients with courage, faith, or other pietistic qualities.

After 1868, when Eliza Snow and Zina D. H. Young began their travels to reorganize the Relief Society, these Sisters spoke in tongues and interpreted tongues in the smaller villages and hamlets throughout much of the Utah Territory. In addition to observing the practice in their Society leaders, some local Society members were promised the gift for their own use. And Church members who attended the dedication of the Manti, Utah, temple in 1888 also witnessed several incidences in which both men and women spoke in tongues.

Mormon men, too, recorded a continuing practice. In 1900, Apostle John W. Taylor admitted that the gift of prophecy was designed for comfort rather than salvation; and the time would come when the Church would not need any of the gifts of the spirit. But Taylor also noted, "We do need them today very badly"; and he admitted that it was a "comfort to our hearts to see a man or woman enjoying a

gift of God" in Church meetings (CR, Apr. 1900, pp. 26-27). And in 1902, Elder Stephen L. Chipman boasted that his stake had "the spirit of prophecy, the gift of tongues, the gift of revelation," and a woman had recently given a useful prophecy concerning her son (CR, Oct. 1902, p. 69).

Changes in policy. The foregoing suggest that a sufficient number of nineteenth-century Mormon women spoke in tongues that public discourse responded to, and occasionally sanctioned, their practice. However, in 1900 Apostle Joseph F. Smith suggested that the gift of tongues, accompanied by sufficient study, could be used appropriately to learn a foreign language for use in filling a Church mission. Smith also observed, however, that probably no gift of the spirit of God was more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues. And he warned Church members not to let the devil deceive them by such practice. In the same General Conference of the Church, Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff advised, "If the Bishop, who is a common judge in Israel, tells a person to restrain this gift, or any other gift, it is the duty of that person to do it . . . ; be obedient to our Bishops" (CR, Apr. 1901, p. 12).

In 1921, Charles W. Penrose of the First Presidency noted that some Sisters claimed "the right to go around and hold meetings of their own and speak in

tongues and interpret the same and to prophesy." Penrose said:

> Sisters, it is not your right to organize meetings either for the sisters or for the brethren in your respective wards without the regulation and permission of the presiding authorities of the ward.

And he told his Conference congregation about a group of women who "used to meet together, relate visions, speak in tongues." And they had "a glorious time." But, after they were told to get their bishop's permission, they never "held such meetings since that time" (CR, Apr. 1921, pp. 199-200).

In the foregoing, Penrose criticizes only the women for continuing to speak in tongues, although he indicates that men may have attended their meetings. In addition, he implies that the Sisters' covert behavior was not only unorthodox but also subversive.[4] Penrose's address is also significant because apparently enough women were exercising the gift of tongues in 1921 that they again came to the attention of Church leaders.

The contemporary practice of "speaking in tongues" is defined as the process of employing a second language. In 1949, Apostle Matthew Cowley claimed that missionaries "do speak with new tongues" (CR, Oct. 1949, p. 156). In 1974 Elder James A. Cullimore observed that, "The gift of tongues blesses our missionaries . . . ." (Ensign, Nov. 1974, p. 27). And in 1980, Elder Gene R. Cook claimed that "Missionaries learn through the gift of tongues to speak

Spanish, Aymara, Quechua, and many other Indian dialects" (Ensign, Nov. 1980, p. 68).

The foregoing evolution in policy has been accompanied by appropriate changes in justification. Speaking in tongues was at first dignified as a method of edifying the Church, and later as a means of obtaining comfort. The practice was next restricted and then prohibited because the devil deceived members with false information; and priesthood regulation became necessary to prevent cabals from forming. Currently, "speaking in tongues" is redefined as "employing a second language" which may appropriately be used to teach existing doctrine and further Church growth.

Both men and women have been affected by this evolution, although women have been more openly criticized as a group for inappropriate practice. And both may now employ a second tongue to preach in foreign missions. However, so far as public record is concerned, women no longer speak in mystical tongues to bless, comfort or prophesy. And that ecclesiastical dimension of woman's image, once so prominent, is lost.

The Sisters Heal the Sick

For several decades after the Church was organized, both men and women blessed the sick to recover as well as spoke in tongues. Possibly no other American church of its size had a comparable number of women who either participated in, or were aware of, these practices.

In addition, such experience apparently gave the women a strong sense of spirituality and power. At present, however, custom and authoritative discourse restrict the authority to administer to the sick to priesthood-bearing men. The change is noteworthy in part because women's healings are not just a curious, but archaic aspect of Mormonism. Changes in this specific practice, in most significant ways, parallel changes in the Mormon woman's more encompassing church assignments and authority; and for these reasons, a detailed description of woman's healing image follows.[5]

The earliest practice. No one knows the date at which the Sisters began their practice. Sarah Leavitt healed her daughter when the Church was headquartered in Kirtland, Ohio, sometime between 1833 and 1837 (Pearson 68). In addition, in 1837 Church Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., told Eda Rogers that when her husband was absent she could "lay hands" on her family, and "Sickness shall stand back" (Pearson 65). In 1838, Amanda Smith healed her son's hip by following a personal revelation (Pearson 47-48). Louisa Pratt sent for the elders in Nauvoo to administer to a daughter showing signs of smallpox; but when the elders declined exposure, Louisa "laid hands on" her child and "in a few days the fever was gone" (Pearson 69).

At about the same time, Abigail Leonard noted how an English convert in Nauvoo was recalled from near death: When Sisters arrived at her bedside, the woman was cold,

her eyes set, and a spot of mortified flesh could be seen on her back. Before the women finished their administration, however, "the blood went coursing through her system, . . . and she was sensibly better." Sister Leonard concluded that the woman's appetite returned before night, "and in 3 days she sat up and had her hair combed" (Tullidge 169).

The foregoing instances were first recorded in private journals and only later became part of the woman's published image. However, the "Minutes" of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo provide more public record. On 19 April 1842, Sister Durfee apparently told the Society that she had benefitted from a blessing that Emma Smith and her counselors gave her. After that meeting adjourned, Counselors Cleveland and Whitney administered to Abigail Leonard "for the restoration of health" ("Minutes," p. 17).

On 28 April, however, Joseph Smith admitted in Society meeting that some members of the Church were criticizing the Sisters for laying hands on the sick. But Smith also said:

> There could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water. . . . If the sisters should have faith to heal, let all hold their tongues. . . . Who are better qualified to administer than our faithful and zealous sisters whose hearts are full of faith, tenderness, sympathy and compassion. No one. (DHC 4: 603)

In addition, Smith claimed that, "these signs, such as healing the sick, casting out devils &c. should follow all

that believe whether male or female." And the "Minutes" note:

> He asked the society if they could not see by this sweeping stroke that wherein they are ordained, it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in the authority which is conferred on them. (DHC 4: 603)

That last statement is ambiguous. The Prophet could have meant that only those who had been specifically appointed had the privilege. However, his earlier observation that all "believers" would receive spiritual gifts denies exclusive claims; and in practice, the women generally followed the more liberal interpretation. In addition, during earlier periods, many Church practices were defined more liberally than is now the case. For example, when members administered in the nineteenth century, they usually anointed the afflicted part of the body with "consecrated" oil.[6] One member of the administration team then blessed the sick person to recover; and a second member "sealed the anointing" with a pronouncement of authority, thus distinguishing the act from an ordinary prayer of faith.

Some early administrations also benefitted sick animals as well as sick human beings. Whatever the case, the Sisters increased their healing practice as the Saints moved West. Eliza Snow's "Trail Diary" contains the following closely-spaced entries: 9 October 1847, "I am quite ill--Sis. Chase administers to me--we are blest" (IE Feb. 1944, p. 89). On 18 October, Sisters Snow, Smoot and Sessions "administered" to a sick girl; and on 23 October,

"Sister Wallace" was involved in the work (IE Mar. 1944, pp. 113-114).

In addition, women not only administered in teams with each other, but they also administered with men. On 17 March 1847, Patty Sessions noted that she and her husband " . . . went and laid hands to the widow Holman's daughter. She was healed." Two weeks later the two Sessionses again "visited the sick" and "anointed and laid hands" on the needy (Pearson 71). Currently, however, Church leaders claim that only priesthood bearers hold authority to administer. Animals are not blessed. And elders now anoint only a small area on the head of the afflicted as they bless him or her to recover. A "sealing" completes the ordinance.

Women heal in pioneer Utah. After the Saints arrived in the Great Basin, authoritative men sanctioned the women's work to varying degrees. In 1852, Apostle Ezra T. Benson supported his claim that Mormonism was the only true religion by noting that even Mormon women had "power to heal the sick, by the laying on of hands" which ordained ministers of other sects had not (MS 15: 130). Counselor Heber C. Kimball agreed, but gave more qualified support to the practice. On 23 August 1857, Kimball chastised those women who claimed more power than he thought right:

> Some of you, ladies, that go abroad from house to house, blessing the sick, having your little circles of women come together, why are you troubling yourselves to bless and lay your hands on women, and

> prophesy on them, if you do not believe the principle? You make yourselves fools to say that the same power should not be on the man that has got the Priesthood, and with the sisters that have not got any, only what they hold in connection with their husbands. (JD 5: 176-177)

Given the context of this statement, "the principle" most likely refers to "the principle" of plural marriage. Whether that was Kimball's intention or not, however, a member of the First Presidency admitted that women were exercising their gift of healing. More importantly, Kimball suggested that women held some priesthood authority "in connection with their husbands."

By 1860, the following interpretations regarding authority to heal could have been made by the Sisters: Scriptural evidence, if nothing else, suggested that faith in Christ entitled them to the gifts of the spirit. They could believe that Joseph Smith ordained specific women as healers, and several Sisters claimed such ordination. They could believe that membership in the Relief Society enabled them to heal because of the Prophet's talk about "turning the key" to them. They could believe that they held some kind of independent priesthood authority because of the Prophet's promise that they would come into all the gifts, privileges and blessings of the priesthood. And they could believe that they healed by virtue of their husbands' priesthood authority.[7] Additional discourse suggests that most of the foregoing interpretations actually operated within the culture.

In June of 1868, Apostle Benson called on all women in Cache Valley who had been "ordained" to come forward and "wash and anoint" and "rebuke" an epidemic (Newell 17). But a year later, President Brigham Young told a tabernacle audience that any righteous mother had the right "to administer to her child; this she can do herself, as well as sending for the Elders to have the benefit of their faith" (JD 13: 155). In 1878, the Woman's Exponent published Elizabeth Ann Whitney's autobiography in which she claimed that Joseph Smith had "ordained" and set apart "several sisters" to "administer" in such "holy ordinances" (15 Nov. 1878, p. 91). Stake President Angus M. Cannon told the Exponent, "Women could only hold the priesthood in connection with their husbands." He also said, "The sisters have a right to anoint the sick," but then warned women to be "careful how they use the authority of the priesthood" in such administrations (1 Nov. 1878, p. 86).

Changes after the 1880 reorganizations. Brigham Young died in 1877; and when the new First Presidency was formally instituted in 1880, John Taylor and his counselors wrote a "Circular Letter"--similar in function to a papal bull. It explained that women and other lay members of the Church could " . . . administer to all the sick or afflicted in their respective families, either by the laying on of hands, or by the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord." However, the work was to be done by

virtue of faith in Christ alone, rather than by claiming specific authority to act (Newell 18). This redefinition equated the women's work with ministrations that could be performed by any member of the Church over the age of eight; and it suggested that the Sisters restrict their practice to members of their own family.

Church discourse over the next sixty years, however, indicates that varied understandings and practices continued. For example, in September of 1884, Eliza Snow responded to a question in the Woman's Exponent concerning whether or not the Sisters needed to be set apart to wash, anoint and lay hands on the sick. Snow responded by allocating such authority to "endowed" women--to those Sisters who had made special covenants with the Lord in Mormon temples or "endowment houses." She said that God had graciously "committed" the privilege to "His daughters as well as to his sons"; and that "any and all sisters who honored their endowments" had not only the right but also the obligation to "administer" to other "sisters" in "faith" (WE 15 Sept. 1884, p. 61). According to D. Michael Quinn, some of these women were told at that time that they received the "patriarchal priesthood" with their husbands (27). And, in the foregoing, Snow claimed that only such women could appropriately heal "in faith." However, while faith is not politically equal to authority, Snow also noted that God had sanctioned

"thousands" of such womanly administrations with "His healing influence."

Zina D. H. Young, who succeeded Eliza Snow as General President of the Relief Society, supported her predecessor in 1889 when she again insisted that endowed women had special privilege. Part of Sister Young's address to a General Relief Society Conference was reprinted in the 15 August 1889 Exponent as follows:

> It is the privilege of the sisters, who are faithful in the discharge of their duties and have received their endowments and blessings in the house of the Lord, to administer to their sisters, and to the little ones, in times of sickness, in meekness and humility, ever being careful to ask in the name of Jesus, and to give God the glory. (172)

In the foregoing, Sister Young recognized endowed women, but also limited their "blessing" to "asking" in the name of Jesus. In contrast, priesthood bearers "bless by the authority in them vested"; they do not ask the Lord to bless. In spite of these changing definitions, however, Mormon women continued their healing practice for several decades.

In January of 1893, the Young Woman's Journal advised girls who had a sore throat to "try the oil and a little prayer." If a girl still felt sick, she could ask her "mother or father" to "administer" to her (4: 176). And four months later the Journal printed a biographical sketch of Lucy Bigler Young, a plural wife to Brigham Young and well known practitioner of the spiritual gifts. Lucy presided over the women's sections in the early Utah

temples; and the following reflects her reputation as a healer:

> All knew the mighty power she had gained through long years of fastings and prayers in the exercise of her special gift. When her hands are upon the head of another in blessing, the words of inspiration and personal prophecy that flow from her lips are like a stream of living fire.

The article also observed that Lucy's blessings had enabled the crippled to walk and the barren to give birth. And it concluded that, "Volumes would not contain the myriad instances of cases of illness and disease healed by the power of God under Sister Young's hands" (YWJ 4: 299).

The foregoing could also have strengthened the Mormon woman's image as a healer. However, that image was weakened in April of 1901 when the Deseret News observed that any member of the Aaronic Priesthood, and any adult lay member of the Church, could administer to the sick. None of those persons, however, could "seal the anointing and blessing, because the authority to do that is vested in the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek" (8 Apr. p. 4).

Linda King Newell notes that Lula Greene Richards, the first Editor of the Woman's Exponent, wrote Church President Lorenzo Snow the next day to question the restriction. In her letter, Richards reminded the President that Eliza Snow (his own sister) had been instructed in the practice by her husband, Joseph Smith. Eliza had subsequently taught other Sisters that sealing was an important part of the ordinance. Richards also

observed that if what Eliza taught was wrong, then "thousands of other members" had been "laboring under a very serious mistake." And she concluded that the women did not seal by authority of the priesthood, but in the name of Jesus Christ. However, President Snow responded to a similar inquiry from the Relief Society by advising the Sisters to administer in faith, but "confirm" rather than "seal" their efforts (Newell 20).

Although Lorenzo Snow's letter further restricted practice, the Sisters continued their efforts. In 1904, the Portland Oregonian observed that a Mormon woman could anoint a sick child if her husband were not at home and it was not convenient to call an elder (JH 12 May 1904, p. 5). And in 1902, men attending a General Priesthood Meeting were advised that if a woman "were to be anointed all over," then the man "would confirm the anointing." Otherwise, Sisters had "no business in taking any hand in it at all in connection with the brethren" (JH 7 Apr. 1902, p. 2; emphasis added). The foregoing suggests that when sick women needed extensive touching, the Sisters might still administer with men.

In an undated letter circulated during that same decade, the General Board of Relief Society claimed the following: Endowed women in good standing might administer to other Sisters prior to childbirth. Such administrations need not necessarily be directed by the president of the local Relief Societies. Sisters desiring blessings should

be able to select their benefactors. Confirmation should be done in the name of Jesus Christ, not mentioning authority. The Letter also observed that, ". . . The Lord has heard and answered the Prayers of the sisters in these ministrations many times" (Newell 25).

In 1907, President Joseph F. Smith reaffirmed joint administrations. In the February Improvement Era, Smith denied that women held any priesthood with their husbands--a major redefinition--; but he also noted that the Sisters might be invited to "lay hands on the sick" with priesthood bearers. And in such cases, the man could conclude the sealing "courteously" by saying, "By authority of the holy priesthood in us vested" (IE Feb. 1907, p. 308). Two years later the First Presidency again sanctioned women's restricted practice by noting that the women who administered to children "need not necessarily be only those who had received their endowments" (Newell 21).

In October of 1914, however, the First Presidency of the Church wrote another Circular Letter in which the women's work was defined as neither a peculiar Relief Society function nor an ordinance. Members were advised that lay petitions for health should be confirmed rather than sealed. The First Presidency also claimed that the Lord had commanded his followers to "call in the elders to administer to the sick" when they were available. And the Letter concluded that "in all sacred functions performed

by our sisters, there should be perfect harmony between them and the Bishop, . . ." (Newell 25). Circular Letters are usually directed towards bishops, stake presidents and mission presidents, however; therefore all Church members might not have learned quickly of these policy changes.

Public disapproval and quiet forgetting. The most public notice possible, however, was made in 1921. In the Church's General Conference that April, Charles W. Penrose of the First Presidency accused women of inappropriate practice and restricted their action. Penrose first recognized Christ's promise of spiritual gifts to true believers; and he admitted that there might be "occasions" when "perhaps it would be wise" for a woman to "lay hands upon a child" and "bless others of their sex." That was "all right, so far as it goes." The President then said:

> But when women go around and declare that they have been set apart to administer to the sick and take the place that is given to the elders of the Church by revelation as declared through James of old, and through the Prophet Joseph Smith in modern times, that is an assumption of authority and contrary to scripture, which is that when people are sick they shall call for the elders of the Church and they shall pray over them and officially lay hands on them. (CR Apr. 1921, p. 199)

In the foregoing, Penrose seems most offended by the women's claims that they had a right--had been "set apart"--to heal and thus "take the elders' place." Previous criticism had not focused so explicitly on male loss. However, Penrose reinforced the elders' rights; and his advice probably had significant impact not only

because of his authoritative position but also because of the nature of his twentieth century audience.

In 1921, Mormon women had been healing for almost ninety years; but the powerful women leaders and many famous healers were then dead. Any woman "set apart" by Joseph Smith was also dead, and the second generation who knew that tradition were very old. The "Minutes" of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo did not exist in any current publication. Even women who had heard President Brigham Young confirm their practice were few. Most women healers in 1921 would have come from a tradition located largely in women's behavior and unpublished discourse. And Penrose confronted them with institutional re-interpretation of their work.

The women's responses are located largely in private or semiprivate documents. A touching example is the exchange of letters between Sister Martha Hickman of Logan and Louise Yates Robison, the seventh General President of the Relief Society. In December of 1935, Sister Hickman reminded President Robison that after the temples had discontinued their own ordinance work for sick or expectant women, stake and ward Relief Society members were set apart to perform a similar function. Hickman then asked if the practice was still appropriate, and President Robison responded as follows:

> . . . this beautiful ordinance has always been with the Relief Society, and it is our earnest hope that we may continue to have that privilege, and up to the present time the Presidents of the Church have always

> allowed it to us. There are some places, however, where a definite stand against it has been taken by the Priesthood Authorities, and where such is the case we cannot do anything but accept their will in the matter. However, where the sisters are permitted to do this for expectant mothers we wish it done very quietly, and without any infringement upon the Temple service. It is in reality a mother's blessing, and we do not advocate the appointment of any committees to have this in charge, but any worthy good sister is eligible to perform this service if she has faith, and is in good standing in the Church. It is something that should be treated very carefully, and as we have suggested, with no show or discussion made of it. (Newell 23)

In the foregoing, Robison redefined the Sisters' administrations as a "mother's blessing"--a more modest endeavor. She capitulated on the point of endowments and said any faithful Sister was qualified to act. She recognized the weight of priesthood authority. She twice warned that the women's work must be "quietly" done. And her earnest hope that the women might retain their "privilege," as opposed to "rights," suggests a loss. Robison also implied that mortal men, not God's directives, were impinging on women's practice. The statement that the "Presidents of the Church" had "allowed" women's blessings suggests that the men debated policy rather than receiving new revelation on old questions. Whatever the case, such allowance was consistently reduced.

In 1946, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, later President of the Church, wrote Relief Society President Belle S. Spafford and her counselors that Church "authorities" <u>preferred</u> male administrations:

> While the authorities of the Church have ruled that it is permissible, under certain conditions and with the approval of the priesthood, for sisters to wash and anoint other sisters, yet they feel that it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the Elders of the Church to come and administer to the sick and afflicted. (MFP 4: 314)

In this letter, Smith's choice of terms supports Louise Robison's concern over the male hierarchy. Such words as "authorities," "priesthood," "approval" and "ruled" index a human governing body instead of divine revelation. Smith also restricts the women's work to "other sisters," "certain occasions" and priesthood permission. His conclusive argument, however, is reference to Christ's personal will--and "the plan" that he gave. At this point, Smith invokes James, not Mark, and ignores Moroni, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young--all more recent spokesmen for the Lord.

Ten years later, Apostle Marion G. Romney reflected the cultural situation as he defined policy by ignoring women's work. In April Conference of 1956, Romney quoted the Seventh "Article of Faith" as follows: "We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc."[8] And he noted that such gifts of the spirit are a characteristic of the Church of Christ. But Romney then claimed that:

> . . . righteous men, bearing the holy priesthood of the living God and endowed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, who are magnifying their callings . . . are the only men upon the earth with the right to receive and exercise the gifts of the spirit. (CR Apr. 1956, p. 72)

Romney said nothing about the Sisters' past exercise or present possibility. Woman's healing image was eroding.

Subsequent public discourse has also excluded women. As an example, in the March 1960 Improvement Era, Christ's "comforting" gifts of the spirit are redefined as "the comforter" who inspires priesthood bearers (pp. 194-195). Five years later, Donna Higgins titled an article in the same journal "Spiritual Gifts." Higgins first claimed that Christ gave "authority to heal the sick" to "his chosen Twelve Apostles and to the Church." She quoted the Seventh Article of Faith as evidence of Mormon intent. She justified contemporary practice by citing James, rather than Mark: sick members should "call for the elders of the church." Finally, Higgins' examples of active practitioners were all Mormon men, while women provided examples of those who "have faith to be healed" (Nov. 1965, pp. 1003-1007; emphasis added). Thus, after several decades in which women's healings had not been discussed in public, even the Sisters advanced the official perspective.

In 1974 Elder James A. Cullimore claimed that Priesthood authority is always "accompanied by the manifestations of spiritual gifts." And he cited James in the New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants to support his belief that the elders of the Church should attend to the sick (Ensign Nov. 1974, pp. 27-29). President Spencer W. Kimball followed suit in 1981 when he

explained the criteria and procedures for orthodox administrations. In an October New Era article titled "President Kimball Speaks Out on Administration to the Sick," the President defined the procedure as "an ordinance of two parts, the anointing and the sealing." He described how "an elder" should anoint the afflicted person's head with oil and bless the person to recover "in the name of the Lord and by authority of the priesthood." After the anointing, two or more elders give a subsequent blessing, again in Christ's name, and seal the anointing "by authority of the priesthood." And, Kimball concluded that, "only by the priesthood are results manifested" (45-50).

Given the history of woman's image as healers, a more accurate statement might be that "only priesthood administrations" are "approved." On the other hand, as Patriarch and Prophet of the Church, President Kimball had every right to define the situation in whatever form he chose; and the effect on most readers was probably a reaffirmation of common sense. In addition, because women were never recognized in that most authoritative text, they were implicitly defined out of the practice. And because they were invisible, it was unnecessary to comment on their lack of role.

Thus, women were more effectively excluded in Kimball's essay at that date than if argument against their work had been advanced. For the previous fifty

years, authoritative public discourse had discussed men's authority and ignored women's dwindling private practice. And official silence on woman's efforts resolved a once viable issue into a Church-wide convention of priesthood rights. After a century of recognition, woman's image as a healer was forgotten.

Women Missionaries

From the time of its organization until the present, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has conducted an extensive proselyting program. Unlike their experience with the gifts of the spirit, however, Mormon women were included late in missionary work and still receive little encouragement to serve. Currently, the Church is most successful in its Third World and Japanese Missions where "Sister missionaries" teach large numbers of single women and women heads of households. Typically, however, a larger percentage of women than men are assigned to "welfare" instruction rather than to teaching doctrine in a "proselyting" role.

In addition, the Sisters may not serve as mission presidents, assistants to the president, or "zone" leaders--all high-level administrative positions. They may not baptize, confirm membership, or head the "branches" of the Church within the mission. However, Sister missionaries may teach Church doctrine; prepare investigators <u>for</u> baptism; "fellowship," "activate," and "reactivate" existing female members or families; head the

women's auxiliaries in the branches; instruct new members in their branch assignments; work in "visitors' centers"; and teach home-making, family living, health care, sanitation practices, and other social-welfare concepts to those in need. Many of these assignments are new to the women's work, as the following analysis will disclose.

Nineteenth Century Missionary Efforts

According to Calvin Kunz, most women in the early mission fields simply accompanied their husbands and extended their domestic efforts to a slightly broader sphere. (1976). Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff and Erastus Snow took their families on their early missions; and Mary Ann Frost Pratt joined her husband Parley in England in 1840. In 1850, however, Louisa Barnes Pratt wrote that she had been "blessed . . . , called, set apart, and ordained" to aid her husband in "teaching the people" by Brigham Young (Kunz 1981, p. 31). President Young also gave Sister Louisa a bottle of consecrated oil before she left, and she became a noted healer in the Society Islands.

When Jane Lewis, Elvira Woodbury and Patty Perkins served in the South Pacific, they taught school and did contract sewing to support themselves and their husbands. Other Sisters wrote letters, cleaned house, prepared meals, kept up the mission headquarters and small local branches or churches, tended children, taught native women household skills, and operated small schools for native

children. Kunz concludes that from 1830 to 1865, only about thirty-five Sisters were active in such "missionary" work (1976).

On 15 May 1865, however, nine women were sent to serve with their husbands in the Sandwich Islands; and two additional Sisters were set apart the following day. Of these, Mildred Randall actually served alone because her husband suffered a change of heart and returned to Utah. In 1873, the same Sister Randall served again without her husband; and other women without husbands appeared in mission fields. In 1888 Maria Dalrymple served with her daughter; and a year later, a divorced woman was sent to Norway on a genealogical assignment. However, the real change in activity correlates with a letter written by Joseph W. McMurrin, President of the European Mission, in which he requested more women for his area. McMurrin explained: "Our sisters gained attention in England where the elders could scarcely gain a hearing" (JHC 11 Mar. 1898, p. 2).

The next month, the question was raised in the Church's April Conference. Counselor George Q. Cannon observed that "it seems as though" the Lord was preparing the way for women "to do some good" as missionaries; and he concluded that, "To some lands under some circumstances suitable women might go . . ." (CR Apr. 1898, p. 7). Apostle John W. Taylor told the same congregation that, "Occasionally wise and prudent women would be permitted to

go forth" (CR, p. 40) In comparison, Virginia Brereton and Christa Klein note that by 1882, sixteen existing Protestant societies had raised almost six million dollars and sent out 694 single women missionaries. By 1900 the women's societies were supporting 389 wives and 856 single women missionaries (175).

The statements by Cannon and Taylor, while enabling, are also interesting because of the obvious qualifications for service. Such terms as "seemed," "some good," "some lands," "some circumstances," "suitable women," "occasionally," "wise and prudent," and "will be permitted to go" indicate the tentative approval of Church leaders. However, from that time on, women have served in fluctuating numbers as Church and world conditions have also changed. In addition, from 1898 on, women missionaries have been "set apart" and "certified"--but no longer "ordained" to serve.[9]

Early Images in the Women's Journals

General Church discourse has essentially ignored the women's missionary efforts. However, in 1900 the Young Woman's Journal printed a series of essays concerning women's new "sphere." As a part of that feature, an elder in Apia, Samoa, observed that five women in his mission field provided model homes, taught schools and "socialized" other women throughout the island. The elder also asked what the sisters were doing "towards spreading the Gospel?" And he answered, "Not so much, perhaps, as

their sterner brothers." Later in the same feature, the branch president's wife in that mission exclaimed, "What joy I take in going out tracting from house to house with my husband." The feature also observed that girls could take a special course at L.D.S. College to prepare them for their missions (YWJ 11: 125-127).

Thus, men and women described the Sisters' experiences differently; and, in some cases, women's efforts were unique. Blanche Woodruff Daynes wrote the Journal that she had gone "tracting" with her infant " . . . in his cart, and visited fourteen houses. This was as much as I could do in one day . . . ." Daynes also admitted that she did not know how much she could accomplish that summer "with baby." Apparently the woman labored with no one but her child; because she observed that "Joe and Ed" worked together, while she took care of her son (11: 279). For several decades in the twentieth century, Mormon women also served missions with their husbands. Later the practice was restricted to "retired" missionary couples or the families of mission presidents.

In 1901 the Woman's Exponent observed:

> President Lyman, late of the European Mission, has in all soberness declared 'that the lady missionary is no longer an experiment, but an unqualified success.' In the dawn of the twentieth century this fact has been demonstrated to the world. What will the future unfold? (1 Aug. 1901, p. 22)

Twenty years into the future, the Young Woman's Journal reported continued "success." In 1921, Apostle David O. McKay noted that, "Almost without exception, the women

whom we have met in their 'fields of labor' have proved to be not only equal but superior to the men in ability, keen insight and energetic service" (YWJ 32: 503).

Early Twentieth Century Patterns

Although Church leaders admit that women are good missionaries, they have never served in numbers comparable with men. In addition, until recently most Church-wide discourse either ignored women as candidates or assigned them a "more appropriate" domestic role. However, women have been recruited occasionally, when they filled special needs. In 1928, Apostle Richard R. Lyman told a General Conference congregation that one mission president had asked him that morning "to send more young women into the mission field" (CR Oct. 1928, pp. 72-73).

In another unsettled period, the First Presidency wrote Serge F. Ballif, President of Utah State Agricultural College, as follows: "Dear Brother: We are greatly in need of lady missionaries in the United States Missions." The members of the First Presidency did not indicate whether that 1915 need was created by unrest in Europe or by the Church's own increased activity. However, they did specify women who had both physical and financial resources to serve. The First Presidency also wanted " . . . good, steady, representative women, not too young, with a good education and knowledge of the Gospel." And the letter concludes, "We are especially in need of a few stenographers" (MFP 4: 335).

As hostilities intensified in Europe, more Sisters served outside of offices and outside of official calls. In 1917, the Young Woman's Journal urged teenage girls to attend "street meetings" and "do active missionary work, under proper authority and supervision." The Journal also reported that more than 650 Mormon women had served missions during the period 1913-1917, although they could not do as much as the Elders because they were not in the Priesthood (28: 101).

In fact, a smaller percentage of women served missions during World War I than during World War II. Photographs of mission "conferences" in 1917 show approximately twenty-two percent of the domestic missionary force to be women. That ratio nearly doubled near the end of World War II, even though women were not to be actively recruited. In November of 1943, the First Presidency advised bishops that the Church could use good female stenographers, female school teachers who could pay their own way for limited service, and mature couples.

In this same "Message," however, the First Presidency also asked local leaders not to call extra sisters because of " . . . the absence from the missions of brethren of the Priesthood to take the lead in missionary service" (MFP 6: 204-205; emphasis added). Despite that official position, two Improvement Era photographs of missionaries leaving in 1944 show thirty-seven percent and forty-one percent women,

respectively (Feb., p. 95; July, p. 441). In addition, the great majority of such Sisters were young, rather than mature wives. While the war provoked women to serve, however, the armistice took them out of the field again.

Changes Following World War II

In 1948, the August Improvement Era indicated that fewer than fifteen percent of the "largest" missionary class in history were women (508-509); and nothing in Church discourse encouraged them to serve. In May of that year the same magazine advised stake presidents that the bulk of stake missionaries "should be taken from the seventies quorums"--a specific group of priesthood-bearing men (307). Other discourse simply overlooked the possibility of female service and referred to all missionaries as "men."

For example, that same year a lengthy article was titled "The Girl I Left Behind Me: A Note to Missionaries and their Girl Friends" (IE Oct. 1948, p. 627+). In that essay, women were told to duplicate the men's missionary growth by keeping active at home: "Work in the auxiliaries. Learn all you can, even at that you won't quite keep up with him, but he'll enjoy taking the lead, and your effort to keep pace will keep you close." Outside of the admission that men enjoy "leading," the important consideration is the title. The phrase "Missionaries and their Girl Friends" defines women out of service because "missionaries" are identified as "men."

The Missionary's Hand Book that was used immediately following the war also ignored women as potential readers. This official guide to Latter-day Saint missionaries was written in 1937, revised in 1946, and was still in service in the 1950s. It was presented to all new missionaries as a gift from the Council of Twelve Apostles; and the first section contains a letter which begins: "Dear Brother: Every missionary . . . " (16).

In addition, the Hand Book consistently spoke of "elders" and "brothers" when referring to missionaries in general. Readers were warned about the need to "travel together" so "elders" would not be "falsely accused" (25). The book also contained a short section titled "Association with Women" which established the following rules: "Never be alone with a woman"; "never call a woman by her first name"; and "do not touch a woman except to shake hands with her" (26). Clearly, women were not identified as readers of the text.

The Church intensified its missionary program under the leadership of President David O. McKay but not its utilization of women. In April of 1951, McKay advised against recruiting more women even though "poor health" and military service apparently reduced the elders' numbers:

> It is surprising how eagerly the young women and some married women seek calls to go on missions. We commend them for it, but the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ rests upon the priesthood of the Church. It is quite possible now, in view of the present emergency, that we shall have

> to return to the standard age for young women, which is twenty-three. (CR Apr. 1951, p. 81)

McKay next advised bishops and stake presidents not to call women under the "standard age," and not to call mothers of dependent children of any age "even though the grandparents are willing to take care of the children." McKay's address is important because: (1) An ignored or little-known "standard" was invoked as a means of actively discouraging women from missionary service. Twenty-one is the current age for women. (2) McKay used the term "priesthood" to refer to men rather than to an abstract power; and the significance of this usage will be discussed in the summary of this chapter.

In December of 1960, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie addressed the issue of "How to Prepare for a Mission." However, while the title seems inclusive, McConkie observed that Church authorities "would like to see every worthy and qualified young man in the Church go out in the foreign missionary service." He also noted that "some eight thousand" were currently in such missions; and he concluded that, "If I had to choose between the two, I would rather have my sons go on missions than have a college education" (IE Dec. 1960, pp. 930-931; emphasis added). In that same Improvement Era magazine, Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson titled his address on missionary work "Look to Our Young Men"; and he observed it would be a "shame" if members failed to encourage "every boy" to

serve a mission (934). Nothing in either "missionary" article recognized the women.

In 1965, Church leaders responded to problems caused by the war in Viet Nam. Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley observed that draft calls had quadrupled and the Church was limited to "one missionary per ward each six months" (IE Dec. 1965, p. 1144). Hinckley thus rendered the Sisters invisible; women were neither drafted for military duty nor limited in access to a mission. In addition, Hinckley's proposed solutions read as follows:

> Now brethren, we can do several things to keep the work going without a serious reduction in results: 1. We can strengthen our stake missions. . . . 2. We can resolve that each one of us will be a missionary as President McKay has requested. . . . 3. Bishops can and should appraise the older couples in their wards who might be eligible . . . . (1145)

He said nothing about calling more women into service.

That same year, the Improvement Era printed an unusual account of one woman's missionary efforts (Apr. 1965, n. pag.). But the surrounding ten pages were also part of a "missionary" feature; and all illustrations and references to the work on those pages were of men. In addition, an article a month earlier praised the mother of several missionary elders (Mar. 1965, n. pag.). Thus discourse that discussed missionary service in general, typically referred to men.

In 1969, the Improvement Era published an article titled "Missionary Program." Four out of four photographs, and eight out of eight subjects, were Mormon men. One

caption noted that "traditionally missionaries are young--19 or 20." And the editors observed, "For many their military obligation will yet be filled on completion of their mission" (Nov., p. 69). A few pages earlier, Elder Marion D. Hanks explained Church "Missionary Work" as a situation in which "the Mormon youth is . . . a brother to all other men" (47).

In June of the same year, a poem by Barbara Carr was titled "Missionary Reunion." And Sister Carr described how returned missionaries gathered twice a year to hear reports from their different foreign missions:

> Suddenly the hum of whispering
> fills the room.
> What? Showing disrespect to their leader?
> No. The elders are translating
> for their girls! (IE June 1969, p. 99)

That May, Patty Jackson titled her article, "Do You Qualify for the Heavy-Wait Award." And her "MISSIONARY" acrostic reminded girls in part that "Spiritual growth awaits you when you share his experiences in letters"; "One reason why so few women are missionaries might be that our first calling is to stay home and write to them!"; and "You can't lose (unless you lock yourself in a closet while he's gone)" (IE May 1969, pp. 56-57; emphasis added). The foregoing is representative of the 1950s, 60s and early 70s. It suggests that women either do not, or should not, serve missions. And it suggests that woman's first assignment is to support the man.

Images in the Contemporary Church

In 1972, Elder Arthur S. Anderson wrote, "Nearly any girl . . . will benefit greatly from mission service"; and he confessed that women missionaries "participate in about twice as many conversions as . . . the average elder" (NE Mar. 1972, p. 30). However, although women, for various reasons, are more effective than men in mission fields, they are still not recruited for service; they are still marginal or even invisible in "missionary" discourse; and they are still reminded of "more important" work.

On the other hand, girls are frequently told that they should exert their influence over boys by encouraging them to serve and supporting their missions. As an example, Elaine Cannon told young women: "You can be a voice of encouragement to your boyfriends and brothers to prepare for a mission. . . . Help them keep morally clean and encourage them to progress in their priesthood duties so they can qualify for a call" (NE July 1980, p. 15). Church leaders do not tell young men to encourage or support their girl friends for similar work. The norm is still the man.

In 1977, Elder Thomas S. Monson articulated Church policy in a "Status Report on Missionary Work" for the Ensign magazine: "Full-time missionary work is primarily a priesthood calling," and " . . . every worthy, normal young man should respond to a mission call. In the case of

a sister, however, such service is optional." Monson did observe, however, that while marriage was the woman's "foremost responsibility," the Church was "very happy to have them if a mission is their desire" (Oct. 1977, p. 11). The foregoing clearly identifies the necessity of men's missionary service and contrasts that obligation with some women's "desire."

More recent discourse repeats these distinctions. In October Conference of 1981, Elder William R. Bradford spoke extensively on the necessity of young men's service. He observed that if he could "speak separately" to each of the "young men," he would say, " . . . the restored gospel must be declared to all the world by the voice of His disciples. This means you!" (Ensign Nov., p. 50). After developing that issue at length, Bradford advised the "girl friends" to support the men's missions and do nothing that would interrupt their efforts. And he noted in conclusion that "perhaps" some women:

> . . . would also like to, and should, serve a mission. . . . The same blessings promised to young men are extended to you. Although your most important role in this life is motherhood, it may be appropriate for you to serve a mission first.

Thus Bradford's militant prose and extended focus on male activity changed to a tentative definition for the women: "Perhaps" they would like to serve; "although" their "most important role" is "motherhood"; yet a mission "may be appropriate" for the women. These qualified approvals

sound nothing like "Sanctification through Missionary Service" that Bradford offered the men.

Two years later, Elder Royden Derrick told a General Conference congregation that, "We should organize our family plans to result in a mission for each of our sons, and temple marriage for each of our sons and daughters." Derrick also said that parents might begin such plans for their sons at their "birth" (Ensign May 1983, p. 25). Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency told that same Conference that the Church must "enhance and enlarge" its missionary endeavor, even though the "young men" were under pressures to finish school and begin their careers (8).

While the effects of the foregoing statements are impossible to prove, certain correlates and circular relationships--suggested throughout this chapter--seem significant. First, consistent marginal recognition should affect members' perception of women missionaries. Although the Sisters have served in numbers ranging from one to forty percent of the total missionary force, typically less than five percent of authoritative discourse has validated or rewarded that service. Currently, there is but slight concern with Sister missionaries in the Church; and woman's missionary image is correspondingly weak. Some discourse even suggests that while the woman missionary should be "indulged" in her desires to serve, her interests are "deviant." Certainly female missionaries are

not as highly esteemed as are wives, mothers, or those Sisters who staff the women's organizations; and the proselyting Sister is not an exemplar for young girls.

A practical correlate is the fact that the current percentage of Sister missionaries is relatively low. In July of 1981, approximately fifteen percent of all missionary trainees from the United States were women;[10] and this figure included older Sisters entering service with their husbands. Thus the Church apparently restricts the talent it might otherwise employ in its proselyting program. On the other hand, such a nonsupportive posture also yields women missionaries who are reported by their leaders to be both unusually dedicated and effective.

Woman's "Relief Society" Image

Although the Sisters are underrepresented as missionaries, over one and a half million are currently members of the Relief Society, the largest woman's auxiliary in the Mormon Church. All women over the age of eighteen are automatically added to the rolls, while women in Nauvoo petitioned for acceptance. Other changes have also occurred. The organization has become less autonomous, and members now pursue fewer kinds of interests in a more restricted sphere than was the case even sixty years ago. Because Relief Society membership is an important part of the Mormon woman's image, such changes merit study.

As noted earlier, Joseph Smith gave the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo considerable authority: He said that the Presidency and the "Minutes" should be both the members' constitution and law. He asked the Sisters to provoke the brethren to charitable works and to look after community morals and rebuke wrongdoing. He said that he wanted the women to become a society of priests. He turned an important key to them, gave them the power of discernment, and said they would be responsible for their own sins. The Prophet even indicated that Relief Society women would come into the privileges, blessings and gifts of the Priesthood.

The Transition After Nauvoo

"Minutes" of the Female Relief Society indicate that the members pursued the goals that the Prophet assigned. However, Brigham Young disbanded the Society after Smith's death; and the organization was not reconstituted on a Church-wide basis for over twenty years. Vesta Crawford, Secretary to the General Board of Relief Society, described that hiatus as follows: During the trek West:

> . . . small groups of sisters met together, as time and the waiting periods of the caravans would permit, and often they sang . . . . Testimonies by firelight were given. . . . At Winter Quarters, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who had been second counselor in Nauvoo, conducted a few meetings, wherein the sisters rejoiced and expressed gratitude. . . . (RSMag 54: 648)

After the first pioneers arrived in the Great Basin, informal meetings, sometimes called "get-togethers," were held.

The Sisters later met in "Indian Relief" meetings; and Crawford claimed that a few "Relief Societies," similar to that in Nauvoo, were organized as early as 1851. By 1858, ten Salt Lake Wards had formal organizations; and other Societies were located in Ogden, Provo, Spanish Fork and Nephi. Existing units served only a small percentage of churchwomen, however. As John Taylor observed, the Relief Society program was "allowed to sleep for a while" (JD 19: 246). Later, as the transcontinental railroad neared completion, President Brigham Young assigned Eliza Snow and Zina D. H. Young the work of assisting the bishops in organizing a Society in every ward and branch in the Church. Sister Snow was appointed President of the combined Societies, and was sixty-four years old when the formal reorganization was commenced in 1868.

Age did not reduce her effectiveness, however. After Eliza Snow and her "sister wife" visited Kanab, Utah, local officers claimed that the two women had been set apart as "leading Priestesses of this dispensation" (Madsen 1981, p. 10). During visits to such outlying communities, these influential Sisters frequently spoke in tongues and prophesied, often to bless local Sisters with similar gifts. In addition, Sisters Snow and Young

dignified the new Societies when they suggested an administrative structure that included a "presidentess," "deaconesses," "superintendents of work," a "board of appraisers," and a "commission merchantress."

The Commercial Relief Society

Those last three offices indicate the commercial dimension of Relief Society in the Utah Territory. From the time the Saints settled the area, Brigham Young and other Church leaders consistently promoted home manufacture and prohibited trade with the Gentiles. Some authoritative discourse from the earliest pioneer period, however, suggests that some women disregarded such counsel. In 1857 Counselor Heber Kimball accused the Sisters of buying imported bonnets and "succouring those poor curses," the Gentile merchants, who would "sell this whole people for ten dollars" (JD 5: 177). In 1858 Brigham Young termed women who did not spin or make their own starch "female loafers" (JD 7: 47). And the women were constantly chastised for following the expensive fashions of "Babylon."

As more Gentile merchants entered the Great Basin, Brigham Young observed that a reorganized Relief Society could develop a cooperative home industry, "do business," and put their "little amounts of means . . . to usury" (JD 12: 201). Young later noted that the Relief Societies could "take hold and do all the trading" for the local "wards" (JD 12: 374). In 1870, Wilford Woodruff advised

Society members to "establish braiding schools" and teach young women to braid straw (JD 14: 36). And in 1872, Counselor George A. Smith reinforced Young's intent when he said that the Relief Society should encourage and enable women to "take charge of branches of business that are suited to their strength, knowledge and condition" (JD 14: 370).

Reports printed in the Woman's Exponent suggest that many Sisters did as directed. In August of 1872, the Smithfield Society reported "a share in the railroad, and shares in the Co-operative store" (15 Aug., p. 42). In October, Santaquin reported shares in the Provo Woolen Factory (1 Oct., p. 66). The next year, Toquerville reported donations to the temple funds and "shares in the Washington Cotton Factory" (15 Sept. 1873, p. 50). The Springville Society taught "plain and fancy needlework, knitting, chrochet, embroidery, etc." to "young girls" to obtain articles for sale in the Relief Society Co-operative Store (15 May 1874, p. 186). And women were later encouraged to patronize the Women's Commission House and buy stock in that cooperative at five dollars a share.

The Wheat Saving Program

In 1876, President Brigham Young assigned the women an additional project of storing grain.[11] Emmeline Wells commented on Young's directive as follows:

> He has called upon the brethren until he has become wearied, and now he appeals to the sisters. . . .

> President Young further advises the sisters . . . to build storehouses for the storing of their grain in the sections of country as they shall divide off. (qtd. EII, Dec. 1975, p. 1)

Again Societies throughout the Church responded positively to Young's request. A year later the Exponent noted that the President of the San Juan Stake Relief Society was pleased with "the good feeling among the sisters." The women had "money to buy grain," and hoped that they would have "a place to put it in" (qtd. RSMag 35: 26).

In addition, the Society's 1966 "History" provides the following account of the Sisters' grain-saving efforts:

> They raised wheat, gleaned in the fields, and bought wheat with funds raised through sale of such items as quilts, carpets, rugs, jam, and Sunday eggs. Sometimes they would follow the threshing machine with a team and wagon to gather in the wheat. They also solicited wheat from door to door. (HRS, p. 110)

The Sisters also encountered obstacles. Some bishops appropriated Relief Society wheat for their own purposes, provoking the First Presidency to write this sharp edict in an 1883 Circular Letter:

> No Bishop has any right, because of his authority as a presiding officer in the ward, to take possession of this grain. It belongs to the societies who have collected it, and it is their province to dispose of it for the purpose for which it has been collected, and it should not be appropriated or disposed of by any Bishop for any other object. (MFP 2: 355)

According to the "Church News" for 24 October 1931, the Sisters gave all of their wheat to the poor in 1880 and started over with their collection (2). They later used their storage for the Johnstown flood disaster,

a famine in China, San Francisco earthquake relief, and then sold the entire supply for war relief in 1918. However, Jill and Brocklyn Derr note that the Presiding Bishopric actually arranged sale of the Society's 200,000 plus bushels to the government, and only after the fact apologized for not asking permission to "strike the bargain" (37).

This sale greatly bolstered Relief Society coffers, although the Presiding Bishopric's Office finally took over management of the Sisters' "wheat funds." In 1931, the men told the Society not to use its money to buy more wheat because "times had changed" and it was no longer justifiable to use such a trust fund for "investment or speculation in a commodity such as wheat" (ChNews 24 Oct. 1931, p. 2). However, a proportionate interest on the sum was sent once a year to local Relief Societies until 1948. After that time, the check was sent to local ward bishops for transmittal to their wards' Relief Societies.

Changes in Charitable Pursuits

Thus the Society managed its wheat project until it was relieved of responsibility. The Sisters' cooperative stores also succeeded until competition grew too strong; and in these ways, early members participated in commercial ventures that contemporary members do not. In addition, in 1899 Emmeline B. Wells described other

Society programs to a Conference of the International Council of Women including:

> . . . a sketch of the Relief Society, date of its organization, its thorough practical working, its halls and buildings for the poor; employment given to the needy; and the care of the sick and feeble; attending to the dead; providing employment for those needing assistance; especially the raising of silk worms; the building of granaries, in which to store grain; the establishment of a hospital, which continued for twelve years; the establishment of women's co-operative stores . . . . (YWJ 10: 443)

Later, the Relief Society Magazine confessed:

> In August, 1896, the doors of the Deseret Hospital were closed for lack of financial support. Woman physicians were becoming unpopular, men were crowding them aside, and the hospital had gone through a series of struggles which would have daunted any less faithful and devoted women. (7: 382)

On the other hand, the Society itself remained active in diverse fields for several years.

The organization began a program of health care education in the nineteenth century that evolved into a formal training program for practical nurses. Local wards, branches and stakes were assigned quotas for trainees; and women who could not support themselves in the program were supported by Relief Society funds. Such women usually repaid training costs by donating service in their community for a specified period of time. The nurses training program was abandoned shortly after World War I; but by that time, the Sisters were involved in social work education.

Amy Brown Lyman was appointed head of a newly created Relief Society Social Services Department in 1918,

and this program distinguished Relief Society for nearly twenty years. Loretta Hefner notes that the Department:

> . . . coordinated with the county charity department, county hospital, city and county courts, juvenile court, county jail, police station, state penitentiary . . . Red Cross, Volunteers of America, Salvation Army, YWCA, Traveler's Aid Society, Legal Aid Society, and several other organizations and institutions. (67)

Full-time employees had college degrees. However, some Society members were also professionally trained to provide service at local levels; and all Relief Society members were instructed in social work theory and practice.

In 1922, the First Presidency of the Church advised bishops to contact their local Relief Society president if a family was in need (Hefner 68). The Relief Society successfully lobbied for a training school for the mentally deficient and for the Infancy and Maternity Act of 1921. Case loads soared as the country moved through the Great Depression; and Hefner claims that the Relief Society Social Services Department was "essentially parallel" to that of other religious and public voluntary associations in the United States (71).

The Society's Social Services Department represented only one arm of the women's charitable efforts, however. Members also developed local projects which were impressive in nature and size. As Cheryll May observed:

> . . . efforts were made to improve the general quality of hospital care. Special attention was given

> to child and maternal health . . . . A number of maternity hospitals were established and run by various stake Relief Societies. . . . Other Society activities in this field included operating milk depots for children during the summer, sponsoring summer trips for malnourished children, conducting clinics for preschoolers; supplying layette kits to new mothers; providing payment, when necessary, for general medical and dental care, and organizing an extensive program of health and child care education. (228-229)

Most Society women, however, were involved in hands-on welfare work within their own wards or neighborhoods; and goods for such purposes came from the Society's own supplies. Visiting teachers accepted contributions as they made their monthly rounds; and the following account indicates something of both their nineteenth and twentieth century experience:

> My partner and I would receive contributions of food, soap, clothing, carpet rags, meat, butter, dried fruits, wild berries, etc. We always carried a basket and a sack. The eggs and perishable produce would be put in the basket and the rest in the sack. Sometimes we would receive so many things that we would have to leave them at the homes and go back the next day. If we came into a home where help was needed, we would often stop on our way to help care for the sick, or give a tired mother a helping hand, or take home the unfinished knitting of much-needed stockings. Sometimes, we would return in the evening and sit up with the sick, and at Christmas time we would see that each family had something special for their holiday cheer. (Legacy Remembered, p. 56)

In 1935, the Church instituted an enormous "Security Program," which is now recognized world-wide under the title of the "Welfare Program." This significant project comes under priesthood aegis, and was originally designed to employ needy members in such jobs as sewing,

canning, renovating used goods, carpentry and the like. Such efforts increase Church supplies and create materials with which needy workers are partially paid. However, by creating a central agency and enormous warehouses, the new program also finally offset the need for local bishops' storehouses and Relief Society supplies. And response to the first year's operation suggests that some women were unprepared for change and unhappy with some results.

Louise Y. Robison, General President of Relief Society in 1936, delivered two provocative addresses during the women's October Conference. In the first, she explicitly recognized a morale problem and admitted concern over future loss of Society projects. In the second, she presented a positive report and encouraged support of the Church plan. First, in a comparatively private General Board meeting on Thursday, 1 October 1936, Robison complained:

> It was our understanding that those who required relief were to be given the opportunity to work in the sewing and canning projects. The report is in practically all localities that our Relief Society women, especially the officers, are being overworked. . . . What do you advise in this matter? We have had more resignations of Ward Presidents this Fall than we have had at any other time. . . . We hope that the work can be supervised, and women who are in need of help will be given pay for that work and relieve our splendid Ward Presidents. (RSMag 23: 713)

The foregoing suggests that practice exceeded expectations, that Relief Society paid heavily for the Church's new plan, and that the General President was uncertain how to react.

Her report to the Board continues as follows:

> Relief Society will do the work it has been doing for years. . . . If the brethren will permit it, it will be a good thing to keep in your treasuries and storerooms just about what you have kept for the last several years. There is no real change in our work, we will just take care of our own in the same way we have done, and as Latter-day Saints contribute to the Security Fund. (RSMag 23: 713)

Conflicting notions appear in this section of Robison's speech. She assures the women that there will be "no real change" in Relief Society work, but also admits that the women's supplies depend on the men's approval.

In contrast to the foregoing private report, Robison's subsequent address to a general meeting had an entirely different flavor. Thousands of Sisters, some male General Authorities, and visitors heard praise for the Security Program: "Within the last six months the Authorities of the Church have introduced a wonderful plan . . . ." She continued,

> The Relief Societies all over the Church are to be congratulated upon the response made to the call of the General Authorities of the Church. . . . Many have worked beyond their strength during the past few months, but the establishment of any great movement calls for valiant workers. Those who have made the greatest effort are those who have and will receive the greater blessing. (RSMag 23: 717)

Here, Robison admits only that many women had worked very hard, <u>but</u> such effort was probably needed. The presence of the "General Authorities" is strong. And the foregoing conforms to Church policy that women do not criticize or direct men. Certainly, Robison's private concerns are

ignored and praise replaces disappointment in her public address.

The Church-wide Welfare Program gradually supplanted the Sisters' larger projects; and Relief Society efforts, not just the poor of the Church, have been a large part of the newer program's success. As Apostle Mark E. Petersen observed in 1948:

> Budgets worked out by the General Authorities to meet present emergencies, require a great deal of organized assistance from the women of the Church. Sewing, canning, nursing, directly assisting the poor with shelter, food and raiment, make heavy demands upon the women of the Church. Organized activity is essential. The Relief Society provides it. (RSMag 35: 149)

A major dynamic lies in the phrase "worked out by the General Authorities." For decades, Relief Society women analyzed needs, assessed resources, and responded on their own. After the Welfare Program took hold, however, the Social Services Department was limited to adoption, foster care placements, and counseling unwed mothers. Family counseling and marriage counseling were forbidden (Hefner 72).

Society members remained active, however, as "annual reports" indicate. For example, in 1956 Relief Society women sewed 313,495 articles including quilts, clothing and household furnishings; paid 247,878 visits to the sick and homebound; spent 25,510 days caring for the sick; assisted at 7,168 funerals; dressed 656 bodies for burial; and 26,000 women worked on additional projects

(RSMag 43: 464). Such records are no longer published, but the work continues.

Changes in Finances and other Assets

Other changes have occurred in the Society's finances and holdings. For several decades, the "wheat money" constituted an interest-bearing trust fund which supplied general needs; and members paid dues and donated goods. In July of 1956, the general fund contained nearly $2,800,000; and ten years later the amount had increased to $3,140,000. The Society sold life insurance briefly, published its own Magazine, printed other materials including books written by male Church leaders, and sometimes sold "temple garments."[12] Local Societies were self-supporting; members built their own "Society Halls" until the early 1920s; and after they were not allowed their own buildings, they furnished "Society Rooms" in local ward or branch buildings. Sometimes their funds were "matched," and sometimes not.

In addition, Society women often provided the ward building with its major kitchen appliances and even redecorated the chapels and other areas. The women also raised money for stake and general projects--the largest being the construction of the central Relief Society Building in downtown Salt Lake City. This project was officially begun in 1945 and completed in 1956. However, Society members began talking about their building at least fifty years earlier.

In 1896, General President Zina D. H. Young told several officers that the organization should have its own "House." Other Sisters noted that the Society had always contributed to all the major Church buildings, and five hundred dollars had been raised in the Relief Societies of Weber County alone to enable construction on the Logan temple to proceed. Still the women had no place of their own; and Sarah Kimball said that lack caused her "humiliation." She also thought the women should have land "in the shadow of the temple" (RSMag 43: 814-815).

The Relief Society, the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association and the Primary Association pursued the issue together. The First Presidency gave them land east of the temple, but required the women to raise twenty thousand dollars before they could commence construction. Fourteen thousand dollars into their efforts, however, the Church constructed a "Bishop's Building" on the site promised the Sisters; and the women's auxiliaries were given a few offices.[13] Later, after two world wars and a major depression, the General Authorities permitted the Relief Society to build its own house. In the October Conference of 1947, the women agreed to raise a half million dollars in twelve months; and every member was assessed five dollars as her personal share of the cost.

From that Conference to October of 1948, every issue of the Relief Society Magazine contained reports on

the fund-raising project. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency urged even the men to contribute:

> Now, brethren, Bishops, let us see if we cannot help them a little. I know no reason why we should not, and every reason why we should . . . --any one of them is worth five dollars. Let us hear no more sour talk about this Relief Society Building. (CR Apr. 1948, p. 176)

The source and extent of "sour talk" is not disclosed in Clark's address; but Relief Society records indicate that most of the money came from the women's own efforts.

In February of 1948, the Magazine noted that, "Many . . . made and sold bread, cake, pies, flowers, aprons, and other articles for eating and wearing" (35: 83). In March the publication observed that one ward was turning over all money made by quilting, and other wards held "table sales" after Relief Society meetings at which the women could buy hand-made articles or food. Some Societies sponsored concerts or parties; and every ward or stake that achieved its quota was listed on a continuing honor roll.

Two days short of the October 1948 deadline, Society members had raised $554,016. The building site was not announced, however, nor the land given to the Society, until 1952. At that time, Counselor Clark hinted at problems past. He first told the well-known story of the camel that got its nose in the tent and then worked itself completely in. And Clark said:

> That is almost an exact duplication of what has happened to you sisters in the building of which you now have a part. Originally yours, the brethren began

> to move in on you, and then they moved farther and farther, but by dint of hard work and earnest struggle, you still maintain a part of it.
>
> I charge the brethren who are younger than myself, and who will come along after us who are now in charge, that they see to it that no such thing as that happens to this new building, but that when it is built, and you get into it, that they leave you alone and let you enjoy it. (RSMag 39: 790)

The Relief Society moved into their new house in the shadow of the temple; but discourse suggests that the men have impinged on their programs in other ways.

Changes in Relief Society Lessons

In 1914, the General Board of Relief Society instituted a uniform course of study which included theology, literature, social science and homemaking. For over fifty years, the Magazine printed appropriate monthly lessons for each category which were first written by Society women, themselves. Gradually, however, men replaced women as authors of the theology, literature and social science lessons, while women continued to write the "visiting teacher's message" and the homemaking lessons.

Changes in content occurred as well. Early lessons discussed a wide range of issues and drew conclusions of general applicability. However, after the men wrote most of the lessons, the focus narrowed to little besides Mormon doctrine and domestic concerns. For example, literature lessons in the late 1920s focused on writing in the "New England Period," American and Canadian "war

poets" and American poets--often recommending the complete works of well-known authors.

In contrast, Elder Howard R. Driggs devoted his 1948 lessons to the "Literature of the Latter-day Saints." In 1956, Elder Briant S. Jacobs noted in his "Moral Shakespeare" lesson that the Bard was always wholesome: "Never is illicit love presented as healthy, nor even as cause for jokes and amusement"--a difficult assertion to prove (RSMag 43: 704). And fifty percent of the 1964 literature lessons are titled "Exploring Right and Wrong Attitudes through Literature." Later, the literature category was more broadly defined as "Cultural Refinement"; and the 1967 lessons were titled "Ideals of Womanhood in Relation to Home and Family."

The social studies lessons from 1924 to 1932 bore such titles as "The Field of Social Welfare," "Child Welfare," and "Personality Study." In August of 1936, the "Social Service" lesson was titled "The Prevention of Crime" (RSMag 23: 526). The objective was to establish "a thorough understanding of the causes of crime" by developing the following concepts: the causes of juvenile delinquency and its relationship to adult criminality, methods for preventing delinquency, and the difference between crime control and modifying the criminal's values.

In contrast, Elder G. Homer Durham's 1948 social studies lessons incorporate LDS doctrine into what might otherwise be an academic study. Titles include "Some

Political Doctrines of the Book of Mormon"; "Political Ideas Advocated by the Prophet Joseph Smith"; and "Main Currents in Latter-day Saint Political Thought." In addition, the social "relations" lessons for the period 1961 to 1966 bear such titles as "The Place of Woman in the Gospel Plan"; "Divine Law and Church Government"; and "Teaching the Gospel in the Home."

Cheryll May summarizes her own study of Relief Society lessons by concluding that, "The trend is clearly toward the abandonment of specific academic and cultural topics for a more general approach . . . in support of an overriding spiritual point" (235-236). May also contends that early authors assumed "uplift and inspiration" could come from a "wide variety of academic disciplines and artistic fields," but that later authors valued only ideas "related to motherhood and . . . a spiritual home life" (236). While the foregoing supports May's assessment, evidence also indicates that Society leaders accepted the change. In 1961, Counselor Louise W. Madsen asserted that, "Relief Society women are safeguarded from false doctrine because those whom God has chosen, members of the Priesthood, approve the lessons" (RSMag 48: 724-725).

Changes in Autonomy

The foregoing are all manifestations of a continuing effort to increase priesthood authority and intensify priesthood supervision over the auxiliaries of the Church. Derr and Derr note that such endeavors were

most evident in 1877, 1898-1901, 1908-1922 and 1960-1970 --periods of priesthood "reform" and "correlation" (23-28). Changes in Relief Society status are not so easily dated, but a deteriorating general pattern can be described.

According to the "Church News," in 1880 Eliza R. Snow called the women of the Church together in a grand conference, and President John Taylor acted on Snow's advice in staffing a new General Presidency of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association (ChNews 6 Nov. 1837, p. 1). In addition, in 1884 Eliza Snow responded to the following question in the Women's Exponent: "Should members of the Relief Society go to the Bishops for counsel?" Snow replied:

> The Relief Society is designed to be a self-governing organization: to relieve the Bishops as well as to relieve the poor, to deal with its members, correct abuses, etc. If difficulties arise between members of a branch which they cannot settle between the members themselves, aided by the teachers, instead of troubling the Bishop, the matter should be referred to their president and her counselors. If the branch board cannot decide satisfactorily, an appeal to the stake board is next in order; if that fails to settle the question, the next step brings it before the general board, from which the only resort is to the Priesthood; but, if possible, we should relieve the Bishops instead of adding to their multitudinous labors. (WE 15 Sept. 1884, p. 61)

In contrast, thirty years later the Relief Society Bulletin advised women with a question to "go to your bishop" or to the priesthood "president of your stake and ask him or them for counsel. Then accept it. This is the order of the Priesthood" (Feb. 1914, p. 3).

A second set of contrasts displays the same trend. In 1892, the Relief Society produced a Golden Jubilee celebration. Five prominent women gave major addresses. Song lyrics were written by women. Women read women's poetry. Tribute was paid to Emma Smith. The only male participant identified by name gave the opening prayer, although Eliza Snow created the "grand invocation." Otherwise, the official program noted that some "apostles" spoke and "one" of the First Presidency closed with prayer (qtd. RSMag 39: 174).

In contrast, when the Society dedicated its long-awaited building in 1956, only two women spoke--and those briefly. Secretary Marianne C. Sharp reported on the building project; and President Belle S. Spafford outlined the program of the day. This included one song by a women's choir, three prayers by men, and three major addresses by men (RSMag 43: 787). In sixty years, men almost totally replaced women at a women's auxiliary celebration.

Evidence of increasing male control over the auxiliaries is also apparent in men's discourse. In 1913, President Joseph F. Smith defined those organizations as "helps to the standard organizations of the Church. They are not independent" (CR Apr. 1913, p. 7). Smith also said:

> not one of them is independent of the Priesthood of the Son of God . . . ; nor can they exercise any rights in their organizations independently of the Priesthood and of the Church; and I want you to take

> it home to you now--every one of you. You may hear something stronger than that from me if you don't.

The foregoing is important both for its intensity and for Smith's assertion that "Priesthood" is the "standard" organization of the Church.

Perhaps in response to such redefinitions, the Relief Society Magazine considered the necessity of the "fundamental principle of obedience to the authority of the priesthood" in a 1920 issue (7: 164). In that editorial, the writer extolled the patriarchal order for its many virtues but also claimed that Relief Society women shared "equally in all the keys, gifts and blessings of the Priesthood." The editorial also defined women's "superiors" as occasionally selfish, unsympathetic, and perhaps less intelligent than the females. And the conclusion begins:

> So, go to it, sisters; just put the thumb screws of obedience to law and to persons on yourself. Determine to beat your enemy to it, in the matter of disciplining your own will. . . . The very hardest lesson you will ever have to learn is to be obedient to inferior intelligence, to render kindly obedience to one holding authority over you who may appear to be selfish, unsympathetic or perhaps envious. But take another hitch in your mental belt, and offer that obedience willingly and graciously. Be obedient because you want to be so, not because someone threatens or demands that obedience. Then you can control the situation and not be crushed by it.

The foregoing is intemperate but reminiscent of early Exponent fervor or occasional writing in the Young Woman's Journal. The author chooses the term "obedience" rather than "submission"; and she recognizes woman's fundamental

strength and ability to "control."[14] Typically, other women were less outspoken.

As a correlate, the men's definitions, which constituted the orthodoxy, continued to infiltrate the women's discourse. For example, Mary Connelly Kimball, Editor of the Relief Society Magazine, titled a 1936 editorial "The Key Turned for Women," and so repeated the corruption in preposition and meaning begun by the male historians. In addition, she repeated the statement that the "key" was turned "for women" three times in a short article. However, near the end of her essay, Kimball actually quoted the Nauvoo Relief Society "Minutes." And at that point she correctly wrote that Joseph said, "I now turn the key to you" (23: 200-201; emphasis added). In such a short and tightly focused editorial, the inconsistency is curious.

The General Authorities of the Church, in contrast, have been most consistent in their account of that event. In 1956, President David O. McKay quoted Joseph Smith as saying, "I now turn the key in your behalf, . . ." (RSMag 43: 807). In 1966, Gordon B. Hinckley quoted the Prophet as saying "I now turn the key in your behalf . . . ." (RSMag 54: 165). And a year later Marion G. Romney also had Smith turn the key "in behalf" of women (RSMag 54: 88).

In addition, John Farr Larson noted in a Social Science Lesson that, "The members of the first Relief

Society presidency were called to their respective offices by the Priesthood who set them apart individually . . . ." (RSMag 43: 777-778). The Magazine printed Larson's claims even though the "Minutes" clearly state that President Emma Smith was elected; she appointed her counselors; and the women were ordained, not set apart, to serve. As a result of published corruptions, however, many Relief Society members learned a version of their own history which denied woman's autonomy and strength.

Effects of Recent "Correlation"

In 1967, Apostle Thomas S. Monson titled a Magazine article, "Correlation Brings Blessings" (54: 246-247). He explained a developing program that would "correlate" all auxiliary activities under priesthood direction and supervision. Monson also noted that such correlation would "prevent wasteful duplication of effort" and "unwholesome competitiveness." But his major argument rested on the claim that the Church was "encamped against the greatest array of sin, vice, and evil ever assembled before our eyes"; and "correlation" was the "battle plan whereby we fight to save the souls of men." Monson's statement of dangerous "facts" should have assured the need for the change.

Later that year, Counselor N. Eldon Tanner reemphasized the Society's obligation to follow priesthood guidance:

> The Relief Society is an auxiliary, which is an appendage and aid to the Priesthood. You can never go wrong by following those who are placed in responsible positions in the Priesthood.
>
> Sometimes I know that you become concerned and anxious, and wish things could move forward more rapidly, and sometimes in a different manner. Be patient, be long-suffering, but be devoted and ready to sustain the Priesthood. (RSMag 54: 888-889)

In the foregoing, Tanner defines Relief Society as an "appendage" and equates "priesthood" with men. He denies women's rights to "move forward" in a "different manner" or "more rapidly." And he tells women that their "wonderful work" is "obedience."

In 1970, as the new correlation program went into effect, the Relief Society lost its Magazine, its general and local funds (including the wheat money), and the ability to develop and support independent programs. In some areas, Society women no longer have a room of their own in the church building. Derr and Derr conclude that after correlation was fully instituted, " . . . the auxiliaries taught lessons they did not write and carried out programs they did not plan through teachers they did not train and funds that were not theirs" (29). Such changes manifest a more sweeping reconceptualization of ecclesiastical authority and priesthood privilege.

Fundamental Changes in Authority

As noted throughout this chapter, although contemporary Mormon women do not hold the highest administrative offices in the Church, nor even have final

authority over their own auxiliaries, woman's ecclesiastical role has not always been so sharply limited. In addition, although Mormon women currently hold neither priesthood office nor privilege, earlier Sisters participated in some rituals that are currently limited to male priesthood holders. Earlier Mormon women were also perceived, at least by other women, as holding more power and being more authoritative than is currently the case. All these changes correlate with the Sisters' changing relationship to "priesthood"--the authority to act for God within the Church. Therefore, a return to the issue of Mormon priesthood should be useful.

Early Authority and Office

On 7 December 1845, Heber C. Kimball wrote that nineteen women were "members of the Holy order of the Holy Preasthood having Received it in the Life time of Joseph and Hirum, the Prophets" (Quinn 27). Apparently, Louisa C. Jackson was also promised that she would receive the priesthood "in common" with her "companion." However, it seems that unmarried women or wives of unordained men also received the Patriarchal Priesthood. Mehitabel Duty, an unmarried Sister, received the priesthood independent of any male association. And Zina Y. Williams was told that "the blessings and power according to the holy Melchizedek priesthood you received in your endowments" (Madsen 1981, p. 10).

According to Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, the priesthood in question was really called the "Patriarchal," not the "Melchizedek," Priesthood, and was an ancient order of "spiritual power" rather than that of "administrative office" (27). Whatever the case, in 1874, President Brigham Young alluded to such authority when he told a large congregation that ". . . the man that honors his priesthood; the woman that honors her priesthood, will receive an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of God; . ." (JD 17: 119).

Some evidence also supports the belief that Joseph Smith gave priesthood authority to the members of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. According to Mormon historian Carol C. Madsen, the Prophet told those women that " . . . a part of the Priesthood belonged to them" (1981, p. 8). Later Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter concurred: "They have the Priesthood--a portion of the priesthood rests upon the Sisters" (Madsen 1981, p. 9).

Others believed that women held office as well. Elizabeth Ann Whitney claimed that the Prophet ordained her and several others in Nauvoo to heal the sick, although the Relief Society Magazine in 1964 claimed that the women were "called" by Smith to be "nurses" in Nauvoo (51: 647). The Prophet apparently ordained his wife Emma at the time of her revelation, and John Taylor ordained officers of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Later, Louisa Pratt

claimed that Brigham Young "called, set apart, and ordained" her to go on a mission.

As noted earlier, after the women's large auxiliary was reestablished in Utah, some members called Eliza Snow and Zina Young "leading priestesses." Others spoke of Snow, Young and Bathsheba B. Smith as "high priestesses" and believed that they had been "ordained" in Nauvoo. Emmeline B. Wells supported that belief when she observed that at the time of the completion of the Nauvoo temple, " . . . woman was called upon to take her part in administering therein--officiating in the character of priestesses" (WE 15 Oct. 1880, p. 74). In Utah, women who officiated were called "high priestesses"; and General Relief Society President Louise Y. Robison explicitly claimed that Zina D. H. Young " . . . was a Priestess of the Temple, as was Anna of New Testament History" (RSMag 23: 348).

Apostle Orson Pratt also supported the concept of "office" in 1876 when he told a large congregation that, "There never was a genuine Christian Church unless it had Prophets and Prophetesses" (JD 18: 171). Early Relief Societies were structured to include, among other positions, "presidentesses" and "deaconesses." And the Young Woman's Journal asserted in 1896 that "the Seventy's wife bears the priesthood of the Seventy in connection with her husband, and shares in its responsibilities" (7:

398). The foregoing all suggest some office or authority for Mormon women.

Counterpoint and Redefinition

In 1857 Heber C. Kimball of the First Presidency explained his own interpretation of the issue as follows: "You have not any priesthood, only in connection with your husbands. You suppose you receive the priesthood when you receive your endowments; but the priesthood is on your husbands" (JD 5: 31). It was Kimball who wrote that nineteen women were admitted to the "Holy Preasthood" during the "Life time of Joseph and Hirum." A dozen years later, however, he denied women's personal membership but recognized a "connection" with male authority.

In addition, the next month Kimball told the women:

> You make yourselves fools to say that the same power should not be on the men that has got the Priesthood, and with the sisters that have not got any, only what they hold in connection with their husbands. (JD 5: 176)

In 1878, Angus M. Cannon, president of the largest stake of the Church, noted that " . . . women could only hold the priesthood in connection with their husbands; men held the priesthood independent of women" (WE 1 Nov., 1878, p. 86). In 1879 John Taylor said women held the priesthood " . . . in connection with their husbands and they are one with their husbands, but the husband is the head" (JD 20: 359). And in 1880, President Taylor addressed the claim that Joseph Smith had ordained women to the priesthood:

> For the information of all interested in this subject I will say, it is not the calling of these sisters to hold the Priesthood, only in connection with their husbands, they being one with their husbands. (JD 21: 367-368)

While Church leaders thus granted women some access to their husband's priesthood, individual "rights" became increasingly restricted. In particular, in 1871 Apostle Orson Pratt attempted to remove the gifts of the spirit from all of Christ's followers when he said that when God wanted someone to have a spiritual gift He would "bestow" it through ordained priesthood authority (JD 14: 272). And Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff warned in 1901 that bishops had authority to restrict members' practice of such gifts; and no one had a right "to find fault with the bishop" (CR Apr. 1901, p. 12).

In 1907, Church President Joseph F. Smith announced that, "A wife does not hold the priesthood in connection with her husband, but she enjoys the benefits thereof with him" (IE Feb. 1907, p. 308). Seven years later, the Relief Society Bulletin agreed: "Women do not hold the Priesthood. This fact must be faced calmly by mothers and explained clearly to young women" (Feb. 1914, p. 2). Here the terms "calmly" and "clearly" suggest an emotional commitment to the belief that women did hold the priesthood.

The most forceful series of reinterpretations, however, comes from 1921. In that year, Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency admitted that personal revelation

was a right of every member, but revelations " . . . for the benefit of the Church . . . will never come through emotional women; they will never come through men whose right it is not, and never has been, to receive them" (CR Apr. 1921, pp. 190-191). Thus Ivins warned that while neither sex was to usurp authority, women had a distinct "feminine" liability. During that same General Conference, Charles W. Penrose of the First Presidency explicitly admitted that priesthood for women had been an issue within the Church; and he attempted to settle the question:

> There seems to be a revival of the idea among some of our sisters that they hold the Priesthood. President Clawson sat down on that in his remarks on Sunday. He said "No, the sisters do not hold the Priesthood." Well, is that right? Yes; but then there is a little qualification to it, perhaps, very slight. When a woman is sealed to a man holding the Priesthood, she becomes one with him. Sometimes the man is the one and sometimes he is not, but she receives blessings in association with him. (CR Apr. 1921, p. 198)

That last sentence is ambiguous, but Penrose continued:

> Sisters have said to me sometimes, "But, I hold the Priesthood with my husband." "Well," I asked," what office do you hold in the Priesthood?" Then they could not say much more. The sisters are not ordained to any office in the Priesthood and there is authority in the Church which they cannot exercise: it does not belong to them; they cannot do that properly any more than they can change themselves into a man.

Apostle Rudger Clawson's statement from that same conference reads as follows: "The Priesthood is not received, or held, or exercised in any degree, by the women of the Church." On the other hand, Clawson asserted

that, "The right to the Priesthood belongs to every faithful man in the Church--I think I may say it is his by right divine" (CR Apr. 1921, p. 25; emphasis added).

In 1922, the First Presidency backed their conference discourse with an official "Message" which concluded:

> . . . women, not being heirs to the priesthood, . . . are not identified with the priesthood quorums and consequently and do not receive the religious instruction and training imparted at quorum meetings. (MFP 5: 217)

That Message also redefined woman's relationship to the priesthood as "beneficiaries" rather than "practitioners": Women could "enjoy and participate in its blessings through their husband" (emphasis added). And this line of reasoning has been advanced ever since.

Charles Penrose half-heartedly told women:

> When you are sealed to a man of God who holds it and who, by overcoming, inherits the fullness of the glory of God, you will share that with him if you are fit for it, and I guess you will be. (CR Apr. 1921, p. 198)

Apostle John A. Widtsoe enlarged on the blessings of the priesthood when he said, "The ordinances of the Temple are distinctly of Priesthood character, yet women have access to all of them, and the highest blessings of the Temple are conferred only upon a man and his wife jointly" (qtd. RSMag 43: 778). It is important to note, however, that Widtsoe talks about general priesthood blessings, rather than office, authority, or the satisfaction that women at one time felt in the exercise of ecclesiastical powers.

The most generous interpretation of the twentieth century comes from Apostle--later Church President--Joseph Fielding Smith: "Women do not hold the priesthood, but if they are faithful and true, they will become priestesses and queens in the kingdom of God, and that implies that they will be given authority" (Doctrines of Salvation 3: 178). Smith's suggestion that women will obtain authority in the resurrection has been infrequently cited in subsequent authoritative discourse, however. Instead, the usual interpretation defines a general condition in which the Sister "shares in the blessings of the priesthood": she can obtain the same promises for eternal life and increase as her husband; she can benefit from priesthood inspiration and counsel; and she shares in her husband's successes in the temporal Church and in the Celestial Kingdom.

Recent women's discourse on the subject is somewhat vague: In 1969, Relief Society President Belle S. Spafford claimed only that woman would stand at man's side, "a joint-inheritor with him in the fullness of all things" (IE May 1969, p. 26). And the 1983 Relief Society Course of Study asserts only that while men "perform the priestly duties of the Church" their wives can enjoy "every other privilege derived from the possession of the Priesthood. . ." (5).

On the other hand, women are also warned against trying to assume priesthood authority; and all priesthood

offices are currently restricted to the "Melchizedek" and "Aaronic" quorums that are said to belong to men. In 1940 J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency suggested that women were "'First Aid' to the priesthood. . . . We Priesthood need your courage, your steadfastness, your faith, your knowledge, your testimony, to cheer us on" (CR Apr. 1940, pp. 20-21). Clark's address is important not only because it is typical of the perspective that woman's role is to "support" male priesthood bearers, but also because it represents a perspective in which "priesthood" becomes synonymous with priesthood-bearers.

Although prophets in both the ancient testaments and early Mormon history typically defined "priesthood" as "authority" to act for God, subsequent Church leaders usually exchange "priesthood" for "priests." For example, in 1907 the Church published a formal defense of doctrine and practice in a pamphlet titled "An Address: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the World." The cover also carried the statement, "Let facts be submitted to a candid world." A section of that treatise reads as follows: "The priesthood of the Church constitute a body of men who have, each for himself, in the sphere in which he moves, special right to revelation" (14-15). This relocation of "priesthood" is ultimately the most effective means of excluding women from authority. It changes the gift into its male recipients and converts abstraction into ordained men.

In addition, the right to priesthood is not arguable. In 1965, Elder William J. Critchlow told a lengthy story in which a woman asked why the Sisters could not hold the priesthood. Critchlow replied in part as follows: "I do not know. . . . I'm not supposed to know. . . ." However, Critchelow admitted that he <u>did</u> know that priesthood was "presently and purposely denied to women" for reasons which God had "not revealed." He continued:

> And when he whose business priesthood is wants the sisters to hold it, he will let his prophet know; and until then there is nothing we can do about it. And until the Lord or his prophet speaks, don't ever, Sister, make a pretense to priesthood power, and never simulate a priesthood ordinance. (IE Dec. 1965, pp. 1119-1121)

Thus, in a series of sometimes overlapping steps, the General Authorities have tightened the orthodoxy and strengthened the priesthood quorums as they reinterpreted early promises of authority for the Sisters. The men have permitted women to act only through their husbands' authority; to serve only specialized populations; and to reserve their practice of spiritual gifts for infrequent and specific conditions--ultimately requesting Christ's "better plan" of exclusive male priesthood practice. Currently no public, authoritative discourse addresses the possibility of a "Patriarchal Priesthood" and woman's office therein. Finally, Church leaders explicitly tell the Sisters that they have <u>no</u> special authority--no priesthood--and not to dare to assume or imitate it. No official dissent can be found.

Summary: Ecclesiastical Images

Over the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, women members have acted with varying degrees of what might be termed ecclesiastical powers. Women's missionary efforts were minimal at first but then increased to account for an average of twenty percent of the total force after the turn of the century. In general, women missionaries increase in numbers as woman's image is more complex. Currently, a relatively large number of female converts serve missions, but the American Mormon woman is not recruited and not prominent in the missionary force.

Other of the Sisters' ecclesiastical activities also occurred in formally bestowed "office" and some in the exercise of Christ's promised "gifts of the spirit." In most cases, however, such effort was concentrated in the nineteenth century, and has continued to diminish ever since. At the present time, most Church members are unaware of the Sisters' earlier practices and claims. In addition, most members are convinced that only men hold any priesthood in the Church and priesthood is prerequisite for both administrative and ritualistic action.

Several factors correlate with the changes described above and with the Church's acceptance of such change. In the first place, most major revisions in policy developed as a series of minor modifications to existing

practice. For example, women were not directly told to stop their administrations to the sick. Instead, they were asked to restrict their blessings to specific populations, to times when other help was unavailable, to be endowed first, to "confirm" rather than "seal" their blessings, or to follow a "better" procedure and send for the elders of the Church. However, such small revisions accumulated; women's administrations are no longer considered; and practice is much different now from what it was one hundred years ago.

Secondly, most changes were spaced over relatively large periods of time. Few women had access to printed records, and common knowledge for one generation was slightly modified for the next. Often the next major revision did not occur for many years. Apparently, only a few authoritative members of the Church were aware of the transformations, concerned by them, and able to "publish" discrepant perceptions. In addition, outside of revolution, only the male General Authorities of the Church had power to prevail.

Perhaps most significant is the apparent fact that few church members have been sufficiently dissatisfied with change to offer challenge. Such acceptance can be attributed to several factors: (a) Mormons believe that the "living prophet" speaks for God; and God responds to changing conditions with new policies. Thus, while one might quarrel with a Supreme Court decision or human

legislation, most Mormons wouldn't challenge professed revelation. (b) Those most benefitted by the changes under consideration were those who also held the greatest authority. Mormon men perhaps had little motivation to resist intensification of their powers, while the Sisters had comparatively few resources with which to defend their position. (c) Changes in policy were also usually justified by apparent changes in the larger "Mormon experience." (d) Finally, women were always praised and promised blessings as their roles were redefined.

The correlation just suggested between changing "policy" and the changing "facts" of perceived experience deserves elaboration. As noted earlier, social policy must accommodate both the relevant facts and values of a culture to be acceptable. Woman's reduced authority in the Church has been accompanied by stated changes in Mormon society which have justified new policy. For example, during the long demise of polygamy and the Church's struggle to achieve respect, heterodoxy threatened from within. However, tightening priesthood ranks and restricting access to authority reduced the danger of discrepant doctrines. Later, an increasing "array of social sins and corruption" threatened from without. At that time, "priesthood correlation" was the arsenal that would "save the souls of men." Both situations justified chivalric images in which ordained men protected the membership from harm.

On the other hand, although woman's roles and authority have undergone significant change, her approved roles are always highly valued; and the orthodox woman's image is both dignified and made attractive. In particular, women are praised as they are "obedient" to God and priesthood counsel; and such obedience is claimed to be the only means by which "select" beneficiaries can receive God's finest blessings. It should be no surprise, therefore, that the Sisters' published response to change has generally been accepting.

As an example of the women's response, Marianne Sharp of the Relief Society General Presidency once boasted that the Relief Society was the superior woman's organization in all the world because it was "instructed by the Priesthood of God" (RSMag 43: 172). Thus, while the Sisters' ecclesiastical image has changed from one of relative power and authority to one of increased subordination, most Church members appear satisfied with current conditions. And while the Church claims that "thoughtful feminists" are found within its ranks and supported by its doctrines, the Sisters' dependence on male priesthood guidance separates "Mormon feminism" from most others.

Notes

[1] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that only those who have been baptized and confirmed members, endowed, the men ordained, and married adults sealed in an "eternal marriage" will inherit the highest kingdom of glory or the "Celestial Kingdom." Only such persons are promised the finest blessings of the resurrection. Children, depending on their ages, need only be sealed, or baptized, confirmed and sealed, to their parents. Therefore, the foregoing ordinances are performed by those worthy Church members who want to complete that work either for their own dead relatives or for other dead who can be properly identified by record.

[2] For nearly one hundred years, the practice of speaking in tongues in the Mormon Church typically involved two procedures: One person would speak in an unknown tongue--usually a tongue that was not employed by any existing culture; the second person would then interpret that utterance into a commonly shared language. Deviations from this practice included instances in which a single person spoke in an unknown tongue and listeners made sense of the utterance for themselves. In addition, occasionally a person would speak in a tongue not known to him- or herself, but known to others: An English-speaking person might speak in Hebrew or a Native American tongue without prior training or knowledge of that language.

[3] Several small, evangelical sects in the nineteenth and twentieth century also exercised the gifts of the spirit; and contemporary pentacostal groups continue the practice.

[4] During this same period, some members of the Church were preaching unsanctioned polygamy for a select group. Others claimed personal revelations concerning the entire Church. In response, President Grant and his counselors attempted to tighten the orthodoxy and, at the same time, strengthen the priesthood quorums. For a more thorough discussion of threats to the orthodoxy and revisions in the priesthood quorums, see Jill Mulvey Derr and C. Brooklyn Derr, "Outside the Mormon Hierarchy," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Winter 1982, pp. 21-42.

[5] The analysis that follows in the text includes several items reported in Linda King Newell's article, "A Gift Given; a Gift Taken," Sunstone, Sept./Oct. 1981, pp. 16-24. However, as noted in Newell's "Appreciations," much of the information in the last part of that essay was based on research done for this study.

[6] "Consecrated" oil is an oil that has been blessed by a member of the Melchizedek Priesthood to be pure and also consecrated for use in specific priesthood ordinances.

[7] See D. Michael Quinn, "Response," Sunstone, Sept./Oct. 1981, pp. 26-27, for a more thorough discussion of this question.

[8] The Church summarizes its basic tenets in thirteen short statements of belief titled the "Articles of Faith."

[9] The change in terms reflects a change in perception of the women's office. As noted earlier, "ordained" is a term that is currently restricted to indicate induction into a priesthood office. On the other hand, "set apart" refers to induction into other offices in the Church. "Certified" missionaries receive a letter authorizing their call to serve; but male missionaries are still also "ordained" to a priesthood office before they are called to a mission.

[10] Personal conversation on 23 July 1981 with Barbara Christensen, wife of the President of the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah.

[11] President Young also asked the women to produce silk for commercial purposes. However, that project was never developed to full scale, the effort ultimately failed, and the work will not be considered in this study.

[12] LDS "garments" are special underclothing worn by members who have received their endowments. These items of apparel will be discussed in more detail in the section of this study concerning chastity and courtship.

[13] For more detailed information concerning this question, see Derr and Derr, op. cit.

[14] The unsigned editorial could have been written by either Susa Y. Gates, who was editor of the Magazine at the time, or by Emmeline B. Wells, who was General President of the Relief Society. Sister Wells, in particular, was sometimes rash in public discourse. Whatever the case, within a year Wells was removed from her position, the first women who did not die in office. And, as many Society members knew, Joseph Smith told women who attended the first meeting in Nauvoo that their president should "continue in office" so long as she filled it "with dignity" like "the First Presidency" of the Church ("Minutes," p. 2).

CHAPTER V

ASPECTS OF THE SISTERS' SECULAR IMAGE

A number of factors affect the Mormon woman's secular image. At the present time, wide-spread industrialism, increasing technology, social problems, and rigid job specifications have combined with the weakening of the Mormon church-state to make woman's extra-domestic activities distinct and unattractive to Church leaders. Mormon women are therefore asked to spend most of their adult lives as homemakers and not undertake serious, full-time careers until their families are raised or they are affected by an economic emergency.

In contrast, nineteenth century Mormon communities were generally poor, pioneering and dependent on all available human resources. Later, Relief Society programs involved many Sisters in extensive volunteer efforts within the community where such work was needed and appreciated. In a separate sphere, the Church has long encouraged political awareness and voting rights for women. Nineteenth century Mormon women were distinguished by early franchise and suffragist sympathies. Thus employment and politics are two of the most important "secular" aspects of the Mormon woman's image.

The Sisters and "Political Discourse"

Church members learn that Mormon women were the first women in America to vote. On 14 February 1870, Miss Seraph Young, grand-niece to Church President Brigham Young, allegedly cast the first female vote in a municipal election held in Salt Lake City. Apologists cite that event as an example of how the Mormon Church, which dominated the Territorial Legislature at the time, has granted women greater privilege than other institutions and societies.

Apostle Erastus Snow explained the legislation as follows: The Lord "moved upon His servants" to be among the first to extend "elective franchise to women as well as men," and to recognize the "freedom and liberty which belongs to the fairer sex as well as the sterner" (qtd. Alexander 29). Apostle James E. Talmage observed that Mormon legislators gave the franchise to women (JHC 27 April 1902, p. 8). Many other claim that Church President Brigham Young initiated the idea, and Apostle George Q. Cannon simply introduced the actual bill. The issue is more complicated than the foregoing suggests, however.

Early Woman Suffrage in America

At the time the Church was organized in 1830, none of the North American states or territories granted general woman suffrage. However, some women had voted under the Old Providence Charter in Massachusetts.[1] New Jersey permitted women to vote from 1790 to 1807; and

other states had granted woman suffrage for various purposes (ranging from school elections to governmental office) and for meeting various requirements (such as ownership of property). Thus Mormon women were not really the "first to vote."

Church members also boast that Founder Joseph Smith gave women their first ecclesiastical franchise. According to the "Law of Common Consent," the Sisters have the right to vote in Church assemblies "on all matters pertaining to the choice of officers . . . , and policies to be adopted" (RSMag 8: 259). However, in 1830 Shaker and Quaker women participated in both the elective and governing processes of their respective churches. In addition, Mormon apologists seldom note that the vote exercised by lay members is confirmatory rather than initiatory--an almost-always unanimous "aye" or show of hands. Finally, this same vote is also a pledge to sustain Church leaders in their offices.

Most Church historians also claim that the Sisters' Relief Society has given Mormon women unique political powers and that early members were the first women in American to enjoy such privilege. This claim is incorrect. As noted in chapter two of this study, several Protestant women's auxiliaries functioned independently before the Mormon Church itself came into being. In addition, while Smith granted Relief Society members in Nauvoo the rights to choose their officers and administer

their own programs, currently all general and local Society presidents are appointed by the male leadership of the Church; while "form" and "policies" are also either initiated or approved by men.

LDS women enjoyed a brief but early period of general suffrage, however, after they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. At that time, Church councils were often coterminously government councils, while Church leaders were often mayors or the local equivalents. However, as H. H. Bancroft notes, before Utah's admission as a territory the "privilege was withdrawn" from women (qtd. RSMag 8: 261). The Relief Society Magazine claims the women's loss of franchise occurred in 1852; while historian Leonard Arrington cites 1850 as the correct date (IE Apr. 1970, p. 61).

The 1870 Suffrage Bill

Women were refranchised in the Territory in 1870, however; and this event is often cited as evidence of the Church's respect for women. For example, Susa Young Gates told Relief Society Sisters that, " . . . this privilege was offered to Utah women by the leaders of the Territory and of the people without struggle and without contention on the part of the sex most benefitted" (RSMag 7: 152). Other evidence suggests that the suffrage achieved in 1870 was first proposed by non-Mormons.

By 1856, the Territories of Washington and Nebraska had narrowly missed enacting suffrage laws; and

an intense campaign was waged in 1867 in Kansas. In 1867 and 1868 Hamilton Willcox of New York proposed woman suffrage for all of the territories, but particularly for Utah where the Mormon women could vote out polygamy. Willcox later boasted that he had originated the idea of Utah woman suffrage, and George Q. Cannon admitted that the claim was substantially correct (Beeton 102).

On 17 December 1867, a New York Times editorial also recommended Utah woman suffrage to abolish polygamy. A year later, George W. Julian proposed a congressional bill that would give the women of Utah Territory the "power to break up the institution of polygamy" and "emancipate themselves from the sponsored serfdom and degradation" (qtd. Warenski 162). A similar measure was reintroduced the next year. However, according to T. A. Larson, Eastern legislators finally decided that not only would the Sisters uphold polygamy but the Church would profit in other ways from woman suffrage (10). As noted earlier in this study, in 1869 non-Mormons were invading the Great Basin; but suffrage for the Sisters would more than double the Mormon electorate.

For whatever reasons, the idea of woman suffrage was dropped in Washington. However, in 1869 and 1870, six western territories introduced woman suffrage bills. Four were defeated, but Wyoming enfranchised women in December of 1869. And while no elections were held in that

territory for several months, the women also received access to political office.

In January of 1870, thousands of Mormon women met in "indignation" meetings to protest the antipolygamy "Cullom Bill" and discuss their own suffrage. The Woman's Exponent later noted that at a meeting held in the Fifteenth Ward, "one sister Smith motioned that 'we demand of the governor the right of franchise!'"; and the "motion carried" (qtd. EII Dec. 1974, p. 14). Public discourse does not record such a demand; instead, Apostle Cannon introduced general woman suffrage to the Council of the Legislature.

On 10 February, when the matter came to final vote, suffrage was proposed for women aged twenty-one or older who were citizens, or the wives or daughters of citizens. In addition, the bill permitted women to hold minor governmental positions but no "high judicial, legislative, or executive offices" (Alexander 26). George A. Smith of the First Presidency oversaw the unanimous passage; and two years later he boasted that "every lady of twenty-one years of age . . . has a right under the laws of Utah to vote; and no one need hope to hold office in Utah if the ladies say no" (JD 17: 87).

Others located the source of that authorization outside of the "ladies." After an extensive visit in Utah Territory, historian Wilford H. Munro testified that "Mormon women . . . cast their ballots just as their

Bishops directed" (qtd. Beeton 115). The San Francisco Chronicle also claimed that the Sisters voted as instructed; to which the Deseret News replied that Mormon men and women both voted their conscience, which was "anti-Gentile" (JHC 21 Feb. 1883, p. 11).

Results of Early Suffrage

Whatever the men's motives in granting suffrage, many Mormon women seemed pleased. The Relief Society held a "victory meeting" and appointed a large committee to "wait upon Acting Governor Mann to thank him for signing the bill." Members of the committee included Eliza Snow and three other wives to Brigham Young, one of George A. Smith's wives, two widows of Heber C. Kimball, and a wife of George Q. Cannon. The Relief Society Magazine in 1920 also noted that during the celebration, "rousing speeches were made by that leading suffragist, Sarah M. Kimball" and by other influential women such as Phoebe Woodruff, Bathsheba W. Smith, Prescinda H. Kimball, Zina D. H. Young, Margaret T. Smoot and Wilmarth East (RSMag 7: 152-153).

Sister East apparently confessed that she had "never felt that woman had her privileges" but had "always wanted a voice in the politics of the nation, as well as to rear a family" (153). A Mrs. Ballon "expressed herself pleased" and observed that "much time spent now in cooking could be used to better advantage." Prescinda Kimball concluded that the day was approaching when woman should

"be redeemed from the curse placed upon Eve." And Sarah Kimball admitted that she had "waited patiently a long time," and now openly declared herself "a woman's rights woman." Kimball also called upon "those who would to back" her; and records note that "many manifested their approval" (EII Dec. 1974, p. 14).

Sarah Kimball later organized a program of civic education for women of the territory, helped form clubs, organized classes in history and political science and "directed the work generally." Local Relief Societies incorporated "classes in government, mock trials, and symposia on parliamentary law" into their meetings (Alexander 27). However, as early as the victory celebration Sister Kimball warned the women that they would have as much "prejudice" to overcome in occupying certain positions as the men would "in letting them" (EII Dec. 1974, p. 14)

In addition, as noted earlier, the 1870 legislation admitted women to few offices. Apostle Franklin D. Richards explained that decision in the Ogden Junction as follows:

> Mormonism seeks to provide for, educate and make useful to the state, the whole feminine portion of the race. However, women ought not be raised above the level of man to be his governor, guide or lawgiver, or invested with powers for which nature has not fitted her. (qtd. Alexander 25; Warenski 163)

Thus, while Mormon men and women both argued for woman suffrage so the Sisters might "serve the state," men

limited women's office on a warrant of "natural roles and spheres." However, the Woman's Exponent observed in 1873 that, "A few truthful, honorable women in Congress wouldn't hurt but would help it" (qtd. EII July 1974, p. 1). Three years later the same paper anticipated the time when women would "fill the highest positions of honor and trust in the Cabinet of the Nation" (EII June 1976, p. 4).

In 1880 the same journal complained, "It is true we have the right to vote, but is this all, this shadow without the substance, that our brethren can afford to give us . . ." (WE 1 Mar., p. 146)? (This complaint appears directed towards Mormon men, as "brothers" would be the conventional term to refer to men in general.) And in 1882 the Exponent concluded that a Republic could not afford to let "half its intellect and morality lie fallow," and woman's assistance was "needed in public affairs" (1 July, p. 17).

Although Mormon women did not hold the offices that some might have wished, after they gained suffrage in 1870, they received constant attention from America's leading feminists. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton visited Salt Lake City in June of 1871, when Stanton was President and Anthony Vice President of the National Woman Suffrage Association. In addition, Augusta Adams Cobb Young, fifth wife to Brigham Young, maintained correspondence with Lucy Stone; and in 1871, Augusta's

daughter Charlotte Godbe spoke to a large audience of Eastern suffragists in Boston.

In 1879, Emmeline Wells and Zina Y. Card attended the National Suffrage Convention in Washington, D. C. There the Mormon Sisters were "cordially" received by Anthony and Stanton. Both Utah women addressed the National Suffrage Convention, attended Congressional committee meetings, met President Hayes, and "presented the case" of the Mormon women to his wife (RSMag 7: 267). After that convention, Mormon women delegates regularly attended national suffrage meetings and participated in the deliberations. The Relief Society and the Young Ladies Association became charter members of the National Council of Women. And George Q. Cannon observed that, "The extension of suffrage to our women was a most excellent measure. It brought to our aid the friends of women suffrage" (qtd. Beeton 118).

Later, the Relief Society Magazine claimed that as a result of these experiences, Susan Anthony formed life-long friendships with such prominent Mormon women as Zina D. H. Young, Emmeline B. Wells, Emily S. Richards, Phebe Y. Beatie and Susa Y. Gates (RSMag 7: 267). And the Sisters were proud of their Eastern mentor. In 1899 the Young Woman's Journal named Susan Anthony the "greatest living American woman" (10: 212-213). A few months later the Journal observed that Anthony was the American equivalent of Queen Victoria (10: 479). And at her death

in 1906, the Journal formally resolved to consecrate a portion of memory for "the supreme leader of womankind in modern historical times," and to "petition" God for the privilege of laboring after death, "side by side with Susan B. Anthony . . . humanity's uncrowned queen" (17: 208). Mormonism's own "queen," Eliza Snow, was dead at the time; but her replacement by Anthony is still provocative.

Belva Lockwood, the first woman to argue before the Supreme Court and the second woman to run for President of the United States, was also a great friend of many Mormon women. And in 1872, when George Edmunds of Vermont proposed legislation to disfranchise all polygamists, Lockwood interrupted court proceedings to telegraph Emmeline B. Wells in Salt Lake City: "Stand by your guns. Allow no encroachment upon your liberties. No mandamus here" (RSMag 7: 265). According to the Relief Society Magazine, Lucy Stone's Boston Woman's Journal, also "scathingly" denounced the attempt to "disfranchise citizens" just because they were Mormon (RSMag 7: 265). The Edmunds Bill was passed, however; and oaths of monogamy were required of many Mormon voters.

In 1886, Mormon women protested the more restrictive Edmunds-Tucker Bill in mass meetings throughout the Territory. As the most noted example, on 6 March an audience of two thousand listened to addresses concerning disfranchisement and the general abuse of the Mormons; and most speakers observed that Church members

were being unconstitutionally and ironically persecuted by a nation founded on a belief in religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

In 1887, however, the Edmunds-Tucker Bill disincorporated the Church, escheated its property and disfranchised all women in the Utah Territory. Women's suffrage associations formed or regrouped under the auspices of the Relief Society in all the larger cities and towns; and "crowded and enthusiastic" meetings continued to be held (RSMag 7: 268). In addition, immediately following the Church's April Conference in 1889, a large suffrage meeting convened in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square; and speakers included such prestigious Church members as George Q. Cannon, Orson F. Whitney, Charles W. Penrose, Zina D. Y. Young and Dr. Mattie Hughes Cannon.

The Constitutional Convention

In 1890, the Church abandoned its practice of plural marriage; and the breach between the Mormons and the Federal Government began to close. Statehood for Utah appeared likely, and the proposed State Constitution could refranchise Utah women if so designed. A Constitutional Convention convened in March of 1895; but female delegates were not permitted, even though women had attended similar conventions before. For example, Sarah M. Kimball, Elizabeth Howard and Emmeline B. Wells attended the 1882 convention, "took an active part in framing the

constitution" and were a "decided benefit" to the proceedings (RSMag 7: 266). However, in 1895 woman suffrage was no longer esteemed by all male Church leaders; and Jean Bickmore White claims that rights for women became "the most bitterly fought issue of the convention" (349).

Many objectors claimed that a woman suffrage plank would weaken the entire constitution, and argued for "separate submission" after statehood was achieved. That concern seems inconsistent in the light of earlier discourse. For example, when California rejected woman suffrage in 1878 because it was "not expedient," the Deseret News responded: "Whatever is right in principle ought to be made expedient in practice" (JHC 29 May 1878, p. 6). George Q. Cannon was Editor of the News at that time. However, in 1895 Cannon changed his mind and asserted that, "Things which are right in themselves it is not always wise to attempt . . ." (White 362). Fears of rejection based on woman suffrage also seem ungrounded because two woman suffrage states were already part of the Union.

The arguments of other Mormon men against enfranchising the Sisters for the third time are even more interesting. Some claimed that the women themselves did not care to vote, and some women said that they did not. However, Elder Brigham H. Roberts led the real opposition as he argued that woman suffrage would weaken marriage

relationships, the family and society. And Roberts should have had some experience in the matter, as he was nearly forty years old at the time and had watched nearly two decades of woman suffrage in action.

During the third reading of the suffrage measure, Roberts argued that only free and independent people should be allowed to vote, but most women were not free. Specifically, Roberts noted that most women were married and therefore would--and should--be governed by their husbands. He also contended that voting was a privilege, not a right. And he asserted that franchise was a protection against tyranny and therefore unnecessary for women, as man was not woman's enemy.

Roberts also exploited the warrants of "natural spheres" and "separate roles" for men and women. He contended that men needed the civilizing influence of women; but that influence "never came from the rostrum, it never came from the pulpit, with woman in it, it never came from the lecturer's platform, with woman speaking." Instead, according to Roberts, real influence came from "the fireside" and "the blessed association of mothers, sisters, wives and daughters" (qtd. White 358).

Elder Roberts next quoted Cardinal James Gibbons as follows:

> Christian wives and mothers, I have said you are the queens of the domestic kingdom. If you would retain that empire, shun the political arena, avoid the rostrum, beware of unsexing yourselves. If you become embroiled in political agitation the queenly aureola that encircles your brow will fade away and the

> reverence that is paid you will disappear. If you have the vain ambition of reigning in public life, your domestic empire will be at an end. (White 358)

Roberts also asserted that far from purifying politics (a popular pro-suffrage warrant), only "brazen" women would confront ward politicians, smoke-filled rooms and other "filth." Finally, Roberts claimed that politically active women would destroy the peace and harmony of their homes by bringing the argument and strife of politics into what should be their husband's refuge. Years later Roberts confessed in the Young Woman's Journal that he voted against suffrage to preserve "that noblest and best office of man--The Protector of Woman" and to secure "to woman that dearest satisfaction in life that comes from the sense of such protection" (YWJ 10: 104). As noted earlier, this "chivalric" image entails several male responsibilities and also justifies a number of male opportunities.

In contrast, other Church leaders favored a woman suffrage plank in the proposed constitution. Orson F. Whitney, later an Apostle, asserted that woman was not made to be only " . . . a wife, a mother, a cook, and a housekeeper. These callings, however honorable, . . . are not the sum of her capabilities." Whitney also claimed that woman could engage in politics and still retain "those lovable traits which we so much admire." And he concluded that the woman's movement was "one of the great levers by which the Almighty is lifting up this fallen

world, lifting it nearer to the throne of its Creator . . . " (qtd. White 359).

Franklin S. Richards, son and husband to two prominent suffragists, summed his position as follows:

> . . . if the price of statehood is the disfranchisement of one half of the people; if our wives, and mothers, and daughters, are to be accounted either unworthy or incapacitated to exercise the rights and privileges of citizenship, then, however precious the boon may be, it is not worth the price demanded, and I am content to share with them the disabilities of territorial vassalage till . . . all can stand side by side on the broad platform of human equality, of equal rights, and of equal capacity. (qtd. White 369)[3]

In contrast to Roberts' "dependency" argument, both of the foregoing assert women's competence and demand her fair treatment. In addition, Whitney employs values of "self-actualization" and "social progress."

The Constitutional Convention was recessed during the Church's annual April Conference. Apostle Joseph F. Smith delivered a powerful address on equal rights to the Relief Society portion of that gathering, however; and his discourse was reported in the Woman's Exponent that summer (15 Aug. 1895, p. 44). According to Smith, "many women" were either "careless" or "indifferent" to their own rights, or they tried to "prevent the progression of others." Such were "enemies to society." Smith also noted that "many women" seemed "to glory in their enthralled condition" and to "caress and fondle" their "chains and manacles." And he urged such women not to "stand in the way" of other women who "ought to be free." Smith claimed

that he, himself, "wanted women to enjoy every blessing, privilege, right, or liberty which he himself enjoyed in the legitimate pursuit of happiness."

Later in his discourse, Smith addressed the recurring question of whether rights for woman would threaten her safety: would women then be forced to become "policemen, sherriffs, marshals, soldiers, etc." But he concluded that just because women might "qualify" for such positions did not mean that they "must" fill them. In addition, Smith noted that there were many men in every community who "never sat on a jury, never having been called to do so, nor to be a soldier, . . nor to be sherriff, policemen, marshals." Yet, Smith noted, such men "possessed all the qualifications . . . ." Smith then asked, " . . . why shall the woman be compelled to do these things because she has the franchise that men are not compelled to do!" And he concluded:

> Many women are afraid of woman's suffrage because office loving, office seeking, office monopolizing men have tried to frighten them from seeking their right thereby, possibly, lessening the chances for those same office-loving men to get and hold the offices of state.
>
> Let no woman be detered for a moment from her whole duty, by such contemptible twaddle.

The Deseret News printed most of the proceedings from the Constitutional Convention. In addition, hundreds heard Smith's address while more may have read Emmeline Wells' report in the Exponent. Thus turn-of-the-century Mormon women heard themselves authoritatively defined as

competent but oppressed; they deserved equal rights. Currently, however, Church leaders rank the "natural differences" between men and women higher than "equal rights" for both sexes. And the Church now advocates protective legislation to safeguard their separate traits and roles.

Politics in the New State of Utah

Woman suffrage became part of the proposed State Constitution; and on 12 May 1895, only days after suffrage was assured, Susan B. Anthony and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw arrived for a Western Suffrage Convention in Utah. During those proceedings, women addressed some of the issues of the campaign: Mrs. C. C. Bradford denied Roberts' claim and asserted that politically active women would "reform" and "clean up" the country. Dr. Mattie Hughes Cannon, a Mormon physician, assured the audience that political activity would not defeminize women; and Emily S. Richards claimed woman was to be man's helpmeet and his equal.

The Reverend Anna Shaw was more militant. She asked if politics was too "strong minded" for women "then which sex is weak minded?" Shaw said that she was tired of hearing the "filthy pool of politics" and "woman out of her sphere" talk. She said man had defined woman as "yielding, full of virtues and beauty. That was all right. It was true." But she "didn't want a monopoly on those things" and was "willing that man should be yielding, too" (JHC 14 May 1895, pp. 3-4). In contrast, Susan Anthony

"congratulated" both the "men of the convention" and "the men all over the Territory" who understood the necessity of "perfect equality of rights for women" (WE 15 Aug. 1895, pp. 47-48).

After Utah women regained suffrage in 1896, local Relief Societies celebrated their victory. In the small town of Parowan, the Woman's Suffrage Association "held an exultation meeting" with the "house filled to o'er flowing as it generally is at the meetings of the W.S.A." The women wore yellow ribbons, bore testimony, sang, and were entertained by prepared addresses, an orchestra and a band (RSMag 43: 30). Their celebration, among others, was recounted in the Woman's Exponent, a publication that encouraged women both to vote and run for office.

Dr. Mattie Hughes Cannon was elected to the Utah Senate in 1896 and became the first woman state senator in America. In addition, although they were not directly opposed, Mattie and her husband Angus M. Cannon ran for essentially the same office.[4] During that first campaign, two women were also elected to the Utah House. In 1898, however, the Exponent complained that "scarcely a woman's name" appeared on any ticket. The journal also described that slate of candidates as "a selfish grab of our brothers" and advised the sisters to "see that it does not happen another time" (15 Dec. 1898, pp. 73-74). However, in 1899 the Exponent again complained about the "old traditions and prejudices." And it warned the "lords of

creation" that women would rebel against "injustice" and not remain "domestic and submissive" (15 Jan., p. 92).

Although the Woman's Exponent demanded equal representation, Utah women were relatively unsuccessful in getting elected. In the twenty-seven years between 1896 and 1923, only thirteen served in the state legislature. However, during that lean period, Mormon women maintained an active interest in national woman suffrage. The auxiliaries sent delegates to national conventions; the Relief Societies continued their courses in government, politics and law; and the Sisters supported the drive in other ways until the goal was achieved in 1920.

In addition, the women's publications covered the suffrage campaigns with obvious bias. In 1916, the Young Woman's Journal claimed that the violent Pankhursts in England were really "three charming women" who became militant "through sympathy" to true values. The Journal also asserted that they endangered no lives but their own, but were "goaded" by male politicians to "destroy some very valuable property." Their cause was just, however; and they "fought valiantly" with a "wholesome state of mind" (YWJ 27: 222-227).

When universal woman suffrage was finally achieved in America, the Relief Society Magazine titled its victory article "Suffrage Won by the Mothers of the United States." Given the large number of childless campaign workers, and the fact that author Susa Young Gates was a

close friend of spinster Susan B. Anthony, the choice of "Mothers" seems wrong. Still, the Magazine devoted roughly two dozen pages to a history of woman suffrage from a Mormon perspective. And fourteen Utah delegates attended the national "previctory" convention in Chicago (RSMag 7: 225).

As noted earlier, however, Mormon women had few offices to celebrate. Susan B. Anthony once told Emmeline Wells, "It is very wonderful for you Utah women to have the suffrage, but do not expect too much by way of office; men will not readily give up the honor and emoluments of office" (RSMag 10: 58). Her prophecy proved correct. Only a year after statehood and suffrage were achieved, a Deseret Evening News editorial asserted that women could "recommend good men" for office and exert their "mighty influence over their husbands, brothers and sons" (24 Sept 1897, p. 4). At that same time, the Young Woman's Journal observed that many Mormon girls were involved in politics, and they were compromising their femininity and Church loyalty (7: 37).

In 1924 the Salt Lake Tribune conducted a poll to determine the attitude of local club women concerning women in government. Given that the respondents were active in the community, one might predict liberal replies. However, most women opposed elective office for their own sex: "franchise, not office"; "work at home is more important"; "no false honors" for women; and "office

is man's work." Mrs. Clarence Neslen, wife of the Salt Lake Mayor, concluded that she would not "want to see a woman governor in Utah" (JHC 6 Nov. 1924, p. 3). And Utah has never come close.

The small Utah town of Kanab had a female "regime" in 1912; and women have held major posts in some other villages. However, women have not headed large Utah city governments. In addition, from 1896 to 1976, only 85 women served in the State Legislature--slightly under one and a quarter women per year. Only nine women state senators were elected, and none between 1957 and 1975. Utah sent Reva Beck Bosone to Washington in 1947; and in 1984 this single Representative in 85 years fell well below the national average. Ivy Baker Priest was Secretary of the Treasury under Dwight Eisenhower; and Esther Peterson was Assistant Secretary of Labor under Kennedy--both appointed positions. However, elected women have been few and have run far behind their parties.[5]

Contemporary Political Activity

In addition, the trend in Utah has not changed in spite of the recent women's movement. In 1983, only 9 percent of Utah legislators were women, while the national average was 13 percent. In interpreting these figures, it is important to remember that Mormons boast about the Sisters' 1870 suffrage rights and the fact that Utah was one of the first states to include woman suffrage in its constitution. Three neighboring states--Wyoming, Colorado

and Idaho--also enfranchised women before 1900. However, in 1983, 16 percent of Idaho legislators were women, 22 percent of Wyoming legislators and 25 percent of those in Colorado (USA Today 27 Apr. 1984, p. 1). Thus, while Utah set the pace a century ago, the state has not kept up with its neighbors in supporting female office seekers.

The foregoing statistics possibly reflect the Mormon beliefs that women become coarse and usurp assigned roles when they enter the "sphere of men." Therefore, women are indirectly advised not to seek office. For example, in 1901, the Deseret Evening News warned readers against women politicians as follows: "Masculine interests and occupations have a tendency to efface the feminine with which woman has been endowed by nature" (13 Feb. 1901, p. 4).

Apostle Joseph F. Merrill employed a similar argument in 1948 when he indicted not only political office but woman suffrage as well. Merrill asked his Relief Society Magazine readers:

> Is not the privilege of voting largely responsible for bringing multitudes of women into politics, business, the professions and, unfortunately, vice indulgences to an extent previously unknown?

And Merrill implied a contrast between presuffrage and suffrage conditions when he concluded, "Then, respectable women did not smoke or drink. Now, many of them indulge as freely as men do" (35: 364).

Such poorly supported arguments are not limited to the Mormon Church, of course. In 1967 the Salt Lake Tribune quoted a leading American psychologist who claimed that women never really began "nagging" until the "suffragette movement," when they sought "equal rights" (25 Sept. 1967, p. 14). The Mormon Church has subscribed to traditional beliefs concerning women more than most institutions, however; and authoritative discourse consistently warns against engaging in "defeminizing" activities. In addition, because few Sisters have been elected, few role models exist. As a result, most Mormon women fail test their full political options; instead, being the "first to vote" distinguishes the Sisters.

The Sisters' Image in the Work Force

While few Mormon women have held political office, over the history of the Church many have been employed. In the nineteenth century, the majority of the Sisters either supported themselves or helped supplement the family resources in some significant manner. Women were employed full or part-time as domestics and tutors; a few were midwives; but most helped with the family farm or business, took work into their homes, or sold items that they had produced. In these ways, the Sisters' experiences duplicated those of other female colonizers and pioneers.

After the reorganization of the Relief Society in 1868, members developed cooperative manufacture and retail outlets. As Gentile competition increased in the Salt Lake

area, women also worked as teachers, nurses, printers, telegraphers and clerks of all kinds. Fewer became doctors and lawyers. With the turn of the century, women entered support careers in business. Gradually, however, Church leaders discouraged the Sisters from seeking commercial employment. Even during the Second World War, when other women were praised for their commercial war efforts, authoritative Church discourse urged Mormon women to remain at home and safeguard their families. After the war, that directive was intensified. On the other hand, increasing numbers of Mormon women now work outside their homes. These women are perceived as deviant in authoritative discourse whereas the Sisters one hundred years ago were praised for such effort. The following analysis will trace this reversal in values.

Employment in the "Pioneering" Church

During the early period of the Church, most Sisters in Ohio, Missouri and Illinois supplemented the family income in some manner. Skilled women advertised in the Church papers for dressmaking, millinery or teaching work. More often, plain sewing, cleaning, laundry and exchange of goods or other services were arranged by word of mouth. In 1846, Caroline Barnes Crosby noted that after she moved to Kirtland, "I followed braiding palmleaf hats. . . . Braided near a hundred the first season." For this number she earned seventy dollars (Women's Voices, p. 50). And during the trek West, Eliza R. Snow noted that

she made a "cap" for Sister John Young " . . . for which she paid me in soap, one pound & 15 ounces--so much I call my own--I now begin once more to be a woman of property" (IE Feb. 1944, p. 113).

Once the Saints arrived in the Utah Territory, women again pioneered with their families to build homes, establish farms, and develop a community. Augusta Winters Grant said that she learned, among other things:

> . . . to plant corn and potatoes . . . make soap . . . card, spin, weave, dye, sew carpet rags, paint, paper, wash, iron, knit, crochet, do tatting and netting and make candles, molasses and adobes. (IE Dec. 1944, p. 753)

In addition, Leonard Arrington notes that one California pioneer:

> . . . helped build her house, doing all the work on the fireplace and chimney. She took in washing, cut wild hay along the river bottoms, and stacked it for the cows for the winter; she grubbed the brush, hauled manure on the land, sheared the sheep, plowed, planted, helped make the irrigating ditches, and spun and wove cloth. (Ensign June 1977, p. 50)

These kinds of efforts were often bartered or sold by women in pioneer settlements. In addition, only two years after the Saints first arrived in the valley, Willard and Susannah Richards taught classes in midwifery and the care of children's diseases. Church leaders often "set apart" the Richards' graduates as formally-recognized practitioners, and blessed them with success in their work.

The Leaders Encourage Women's Work

In addition to such implicit approval, some Church leaders promoted women's work. In 1856, President Brigham Young advised mothers to teach their daughters "some useful vocation." Then, if their husbands were "called upon missions," or to devote their "time and attention to the things of the kingdom," the women might be able to "sustain themselves and their offspring" and become "helpmeets in very deed," not only in "the domestic relations, but in building up the kingdom, also" (JHC 10 Dec 1856; 14th General Epistle). Young's concluding observation discloses his warrant.

On 8 April 1867, Young suggested that Mormon women take up printing and clerking to relieve the men who might as well "knit stockings as to sell tape." He also said all such retail selling " . . . ought to be done by the sisters. It would enable them to sustain themselves, and would be far better than for them to spend their time in the parlor or in walking the streets" (JD 12: 407).[6] Six months later, Young observed that some women were then working in the telegraph offices, where he wanted them to "keep the books" as well as to be operators (JD 12: 116).

President Young's most often quoted support for women's employment, however, comes from 1869:

> We have sisters here who . . . would make just as good mathematicians or accountants as any man; and we think they ought to have the privilege to study these branches of knowledge that they may develop the powers with which they are endowed. We believe that women are useful not only to sweep houses, wash

> dishes, make beds, and raise babies, but that they should stand behind the counter, study law or physic, and become good book-keepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large. In following these things they but answer the design of their creation. These and many more things of equal utility are incorporated in our religion, and we believe in and try to practice them. (JD 13: 61).

In the foregoing, President Young repeats his earlier claim that woman's work helps build the kingdom of God. However, Young also suggests that women have a right to develop "the powers with which they are endowed"; and that in so doing, "they but answer the design of their creation" and "religion." These warrants are not often used by men; but Young comes close to saying that God intends women to enjoy a range of experiences, and the Church supports their efforts.

As noted earlier, Young advanced unconventional beliefs because the Mormon community needed a larger labor force and Gentile competition threatened the Church's hegemony. In 1873 he claimed that women were strong enough to snap a tailor's thread with their teeth, but tailors did not want women in their profession and tried to "shame them out of it. . . . Do not tell a woman she can do this--no, no, it would spoil our trade." Young also criticized the "big, six-footer" man who put little pieces of type in place while some women actually worked in the fields "ploughing, raking and making hay" (JD 16: 16-17).

In addition, Young expanded woman's traditional sphere when he asked the various Relief Society presidents

in 1873 to appoint three women from each ward and one from each settlement to study hygiene, nursing and midwifery in Salt Lake City. As noted earlier, this program was later developed to include the Deseret Hospital and women physicians. In 1920, the training was extended to a full year at the LDS Hospital in Salt Lake City. Students were recruited until 1924, when the program was abandoned and women were encouraged to take practical nursing instruction from the Red Cross or from state or government agencies. In addition, local Societies still keep updated lists of all trained women for use in emergency.

Shortly before his death, President Young also asked the Sisters to raise silk worms and weave their own yardage. In 1877, he predicted that a woman with her children could "make twice the amount of money by raising silk that the man can make with the farm" (JD 19: 74). Zina D. H. Young headed the silk industry, and individual women as well as local Societies pursued the messy business for some years. A few Sisters even addressed national women's conferences to explain the Mormon project. The work was unprofitable, however, and soon abandoned.

On the other hand, Young consistently argued that woman's primary assignments were home and family; and any additional effort must not compromise those higher callings. He told his talented daughter, Susa:

> Daughter, use all your gifts to build up righteousness in the earth. Never use them to acquire

> name or fame. Never rob your home, nor your children. If you were to become the greatest woman in this world, and your name should be known in every land and clime, and you would fail in your duty as wife and mother, you would wake up on the morning of the first resurrection and find you had failed in everything; but anything you can do after you have satisfied the claims of husband and family will redound to your honor and to the glory of God. (qtd. Mormon Sisters, p. 202)

Young's advice to Susa was quoted in a 1979 "Church News." At that time, however, the Church was more supportive of women's domestic efforts; and the quotation ended at the final semicolon (ChNews 15 Sept. 1979, p. 4).

In contrast to Young's priorities of "family" and "kingdom" first, in 1873 the Woman's Exponent observed:

> If there are branches of knowledge improper for women to learn or duties unfit to perform, they will know it a thousand times better than men, so give them their choice. If there be some women in whom the love of learning extinguishes all other love, then the heaven-appointed sphere of that woman is not the nursery. It may be the library, the laboratory, the observatory. (1 Apr., p. 163)

In addition, in 1883, the Woman's Exponent observed that, "Women of refinement and possessed of superior attainments" did not want to be "dependent altogether upon the . . . . 'men folks'," but choose to earn a little money on their own (15 May 1883, p. 188). And, in 1890 Lizzie Smith developed a similar theme in the Young Woman's Journal:

> Woman, without having lost anything of her gentleness and grace, no longer accepts that once famous axiom, 'man should support woman.' She cares not for adoration alone, but wants to carry her intellect and activity into spheres suited to her . . . ; and she should have perfect liberty to follow the vocation which comes to her from God, and of which she alone is judge. (1: 175-176)

The foregoing claim is based on warrants of Divine variation, competence and justice. In contrast, as noted earlier, men typically argued from pragmatism. In addition, Smith said that women were capable of identifying their own skills and making their own career choices. A few Sisters even revised the women's options to exclude mandatory motherhood and to include personal interests and talents. Few authoritative Mormon men have argued the same.

Later Redefinition

In addition, from the turn of the century until the present, most authoritative discourse has criticized women's economic pursuits. However, until roughly the time of the Second World War, a small but influential minority defended the Sisters' right to work. This counterpoint is evident in the following examples of conventional and variant images of employed women.

In 1901, the Deseret Evening News observed that women teachers were disproportionately represented in mental institutions because of their inability to manage stress. The News also asked if the "social conditions that impose upon the women the duty of becoming bread winners are not out of harmony with nature" (26 Sept. 1901, p. 4). The Church has long subscribed to theories of "natural spheres" for men and women; and three years later the News agreed with a more severe definition by F. M. Thompson: "The woman wage earner is under one aspect an object of

charity, under another an economic pervert, under another a social menace" (21 May 1904, p. 4). In other words, working women were pitiable and dangerous. Thompson concluded that commercial labors undermined woman's health, trained her to work like a machine, and left her without necessary homemaking skills. The News added that, "Women themselves are beginning to see a light, in which they may better appreciate their mission on earth."

In 1904, the Young Woman's Journal recognized another issue: "Not until a girl goes out and earns money outside her home will she have the sometimes dangerous power which earned money gives" (16: 490). The Journal did not advise girls to avoid that danger; but Susa Young warned against "The Lure of Gold":

> Tender girls, who should be guarded as life's only promise of life's perpetuity, are thrust out into the wage-earners' wild scramble, to sweat and suffer with unnatural burdens, while men look on helpless, for the time, to prevent this modern slaughter of the innocents. . . . More. The girl is rudely awakened when she would assume the duties of motherhood, by spent nerves, a broken body, and worse than all, she is constantly besieged, after marriage, by the lure of gold. (YWJ 19: 207)

Gates' prediction reflects an evolution from the belief that women who diverted their essential energies to their brains would later be unable to redirect those energies, or "fluids," in order to rear children. Some would even be unable to conceive. For many centuries, people also believed that women were "naturally" less intelligent than men because women had smaller brains. Such deterministic perceptions gradually faded in most popular discourse.

However, concerns over women's economic independence and social power have continued to plague Church leaders.

Authoritative discourse also addresses the relationship of employment to the "working girls'" morals. Prior to World War I, the Young Woman's Journal ran a series of fictional pieces in which one "girl" after another had a bad work-related experience. In 1916, "To Seek Their Fortunes" told of a young woman who innocently went to dinner with her boss, only to find him trying to drug her soft drink and embrace her at the dining table. The woman ran from the restaurant (in the dark, with headlights following), and was so sickened by the experience that she quit her job. The narrator concluded that if the "army of girls" who entered the work force would learn to reject older men's attentions, "it might save many a ship-wrecked life" (YWJ 27: 23). The Journal did not encourage women to abandon their careers, however.

On the contrary, that same year the Journal also praised a New York day care system (27: 134-138), and the excellent working conditions for women in the Niagara Glass factory. This plant provided free lunches for women, "fresh white" uniforms, a "factory mother" to supervise the "girl's" physical and social welfare, and an "excellent circulating library" (27: 494-498). Apparently author Ramona Cannon supported women's commercial activities and appreciated advances in management theory.

In addition, the Journal supported other kinds of economic independence. In 1916, the publication produced a lengthy article concerning "two plucky Chicago girls homesteading in the West" (27: 349-353). And "Madge" told Journal readers that, "The bigness and freedom of the life out here got hold of me and I couldn't go back." Madge also thought that "grubbing sagebrush" was "lots more fun than teaching." The Journal praised Madge for her tan and windblown hair, and observed, "There are still lands to be taken up in the west."

The Relief Society Magazine, to a lesser degree, also supported independence and a private income for married women. In 1917, under the pen name of "Morag," Susa Young Gates suggested that women sell fifteen or twenty-five cent lunches to factory employees, sew infant layettes, rent out a vacuum cleaner, shop on commission for "country" people, or make Christmas presents. Such work falls into the category of "cottage industry" rather than full-time employment; and Gates thus perpetuated her father's belief that homemaking comes first.

That same year, however, the Deseret Evening News announced "War Enlarges Woman's Opportunities" (6 June 1917, p. 4). The editor observed that, "bright, alert, steady girls" are working in Wall Street Banks; and "Age for age they are found more reliable and competent than boys." The News also predicted a battle of the sexes at the end of the war; and that prophecy came true in 1919

and again in 1945. During both wars, however, adult Mormon women knitted, sewed and rolled bandages for the Red Cross, assembled medical supply kits, and entered emergency nursing courses.

These Sisters often attended work sessions as complete Relief Society units, with all of the Sisters from one ward working together at Red Cross Headquarters. During the First World War, the Sisters working at various Headquarters also dressed in sterile caps and gowns, with large red crosses on a white apron bodice and flowing veils. And several Magazines during this period printed pictures of the women looking very much like Red Cross nuns.

After World War I, both of the auxiliaries' publications shifted focus to new kinds of secular pursuits. In 1920, the Relief Society Magazine noted that Jean Norris, a New York attorney, was appointed to the office of city magistrate; Lady Astor was elected to the British House of Commons; Lillian Bradley was the first woman stage manager in New York; and women were working as fire lookouts in the Oregon forests (RSMag 7: 46). In January of 1921, the Journal observed that Florence Allen, formerly of Salt Lake City, was elected to a major judgeship in a race that drew 80,000 voters (32: 27).

The next month, the same publication reported that Mrs. Westcott of Copenhagen, Denmark, was licensed to serve as chief engineer on any ship up to seventy-five

tons. And in June the Journal wrote about two women who owned and operated their own gold mine in Alaska:

> They do their own blacksmithing; sharpen steel; drill by hand the holes for powder; blast and transport the ore on a tram-car hauled by mules over a mile to the mill. There they crush and stamp it; tend the amalgam; and make the fine gold into bricks, which they carry to the local bank. They learned mining from their father. (32: 365)

The foregoing "soft news" reports indirectly promoted careers for women. Other articles were more explicit.

In 1927, the Young Woman's Journal ran an extensive series on women's careers titled "What Shall I Do?" Among other suggestions, the Journal recommended "The Musician" in January; "Domestic Art and Science" in March; "The Beauty Operator" in May; and "The Writer" in December (38: 37-38; 153-155; 297-298; 762-764). All of the foregoing could be practiced as cottage industry. However, author Agnes Lovendahl Stewart also noted that musicians could teach in schools at all levels; domestic science graduates could teach or work in the fashion industry; beauticians would earn "independence" and be their own "boss"; and writers could not only "scribble" at home, but also work for newspapers (in the "society" department) or test the "very fertile field" of advertising.[7]

The January 1929 issue of the Young Woman's Journal made a much stronger statement when it told girls it was "vitally important" that they have a goal of economic independence. And the Journal praised the psychological value of woman's work:

> Many writers of today advocate the advisability of women continuing in their active outside profession even during the period when they are giving their best efforts to the home and family. They claim that a woman is a better wife and mother if she has these outside interests along with her home interests. . . . This is coming to be perceived as the wise plan for all women who would achieve for themselves, as well as to help others achieve, full personality. (40: 70-71)

The next month Arthur L. Beeley, Professor of Sociology at the University of Utah, considered "Life More Abundant for the Adult Woman." And Beeley observed that membership in the Relief Society or YLMIA might not provide the "variety of personal and social contacts which the modern woman needs" (YWJ 40: 129). The foregoing was a curious statement to be made by a Mormon man. In fact, Beeley was not one of the General Authorities in the Church; but his university position and publication in a prestigious Mormon journal should have enhanced his credibility. The same is true of the following.

In March of 1929, Milton Bennion, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Utah, promoted equal opportunities for Mormon women on grounds of justice, social utility, and self-actualization:

> It is just as essential that every girl choose a vocation and qualify for it as it is that every boy should do so. . . . In case the problem of choosing a vocation is neglected, is not the future usefulness and happiness of every girl in jeopardy? Is this fair to women? Is it good for society thus to deprive individuals of their right to a useful position in the social order, and the consequent happiness that comes from such usefulness? (IE Mar. 1929, p. 358)

Bennion admitted that woman's economic independence might be a threat to the family--certainly it could prevent

"undesirable marriages." However, Bennion concluded that for whatever reasons women might enter the work force, "vocational and educational guidance and training should be available to girls on a par with boys."

In September of that same year, the Young Woman's Journal tackled the implications of woman's "equality":

> The woman no longer clings to the family in the same way as formerly when she was forced to do so as her sole mode of functioning. Married women have sought and found paying jobs and economic freedom. They have found that they have a place in the world outside the home, and they are eagerly interested in the possibilities of this place. Inevitably a changed attitude within the family results. . . . However, if the change is recognized by both men and women as a natural change, if its possible dangers are foreseen, then it can only result in a finer type of companionship than was ever possible in the old days of woman's more restricted sphere. (40: 643)

In contrast, most contemporary discourse claims that woman's work spoils marriage relationships.

In 1930 Ruth May Fox, General President of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, also observed that woman's employment threatened men's egos. However, Fox asserted that woman's transition from "slave to helpmeets was necessary"--a description never employed by men. And she urged women to get good training rather than "falling" into work: "Get a thorough knowledge of economics, sociology . . . statistics . . . slide rule, adding machines, typewriters, ruling pen, etc. . . . Get a knowledge of labor from the inside" (RSMag 27: 588-590).

As the 1930s drew to a close, Relief Society projects still consumed many Sisters' efforts, some men

were still unemployed, and talk of full-time careers for women diminished somewhat. In 1936, Sylvia R. Grant advised women to earn pin money in their homes by cooking, sewing, knitting, telephone soliciting, addressing envelopes and finishing film. Thus cottage industry incorporated new technology. Grant also urged women to advertise their services; and she concluded that even when it was not "absolutely necessary" for a woman to make money, there was "ever so much satisfaction in earning enough to buy silver candlesticks instead of just ordinary ones" (RSMag 23: 572-573). This statement apparently offended no one as the Great Depression waned. Contemporary Church discourse, however, consistently rebukes women who work for luxuries.

Thus the period from the turn of the century until the onset of World War II can be summarized as one of unusually divergent policies. Authoritative men consistently discouraged commercial employment for women, and some women leaders followed suit. On the other hand, the women's publications always included one or more "soft news" pages in recognition of women's nontraditional career choices and public achievements. In addition, feature articles on atypical careers were common; and the Sisters may have taken such implied approval as role modeling for themselves. Finally, inconsistencies in discourse reflect a period of general upheaval and reevaluation in Western societies. The seeming confusion

over policy, however, also provided women with a variety of authoritative prescriptions from which to choose.

Miriam B. Murphy traced the record of those choices in a 1982 Utah Historical Quarterly: From 1900 to World War II, the percentage of women employed in Utah "increased steadily" from 11.2 percent to 17.5 percent. In 1900, women in St. George, Utah--a town of about seventeen hundred--were employed as dressmakers, servants, teachers, and salesladies. Other categories included farmer, gardener, printing compositor, merchant, telegraph operator, postal clerk, photographer, and physician. At that time, St. George would not be far out of its pioneer status; and the variety of women's positions reflected the need, and thus the tolerance, of the community for women's work.

In addition, Murphy notes that at the turn of the century forty percent of all Utah stenographers were men; but in 1930, men occupied fewer than nine percent of those positions. In contrast, in 1900 eleven percent of all Utah physicians and surgeons were women. But by 1930, only three percent were women (147). These figures are typical of the national trend. Urban, white women disappeared from such jobs as servant, dressmaker, home laundress, milliner, and boarding house keeper; but they also dropped out of medicine and law. Some found positions in higher education; but most entered stenography, sales, teaching, clerking, and semi-skilled manufacturing. Women did not

pursue professional positions to the same degree as did the men.

World War II and Postwar Images

Between 1941 and 1945, over four million American women entered the national work force; and the mass media gradually supported this move as "patriotism." However, a September 1942 Deseret News observed that juvenile delinquency had increased one hundred percent in the first six months of that year because of working mothers. And the paper concluded that while such effort might be a wartime and economic necessity, it "should be discouraged as much as possible" (JHC 2 Sept. 1942, p. 1).

In contrast to the secular press, which depicted women in defense activities and other commercial work, the Church publications during this period featured pictures of the Sisters again rolling bandages, knitting, and otherwise "volunteering" for the Red Cross. Church publications also encouraged the women to plant victory gardens, preserve food, save grease and cans for war industries, and above all, keep their homes secure and attractive. In 1942, the Relief Society Magazine warned mothers to stay at home to prevent children from playing with toy weapons, to safeguard against phone calls from strangers, to comfort and advise: "in short, to keep home life in normal balance" and "so inviting" that adolescent girls in particular would not want "to roam the streets" (29: 680).

The next year, the Magazine depicted the error of woman's employment in a story titled, "All that Glitters" (30: 17-22). After Emily Merrill went to work, the family had to eat "bakers' bread"; the nine-year-old twins became insolent; the sitter did not supervise the children's dressing carefully, and they became sick; the teenage daughter joined the "wrong crowd"; and "lint . . . accumulated under the beds" while the "pile of mending . . . grew steadily higher" and the ironing "hung perennially on the clothes rack." The story clearly implied that no one but mother Emily should do the unfinished work; and the variety of Merrill problems suggests some interesting cultural values.

After the war, all American women were instructed to remain home to create a stable society and to provide jobs for returning veterans. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the General Authorities of the Mormon Church focused on the evils of divorce and juvenile delinquency. Women were told that their domestic efforts would insure both quality family relations and a wholesome community. Most Church leaders also argued that a mother's move to work outside her home was a choice that injured her children. In 1960, the Improvement Era observed:

> . . . a little fellow feels the need to check in with his mom every few minutes. . . . It means a great deal to a boy just to have his mom around . . . . Even in high school a boy who comes home to an empty house gets a sinking feeling. He may not say anything, but he feels. (Jan., p. 41)

The sexist writing in the foregoing was typical 1960 journalism and not unique to the Mormon Church.

The next year, the Deseret News quoted Mormon-born Esther Peterson, Assistant Secretary of Labor under John F. Kennedy, who said: "A woman's place is where she is happiest--and it can be at home, at outside work or both. When she is happy, so is her family" (JHC 9 Oct. 1961, p. 1). The News responded with "honor" to Mrs. Peterson but also contended that, "A woman's place is . . . where she can give the greatest happiness to others." And the paper concluded that most women worked not because of the "high cost of living, but because of the cost of living high." In the foregoing, the homemaker is dignified as a saintly being while working women are selfish and they misrepresent their true motives. In 1969, Improvement Era readers learned the "cardinal teaching" that the " . . . man is the head of the family. He is to be the bread winner" (Dec. 1969, p. 108).

Some discourse considered the needs of women whose children were grown and who therefore had resources to spend outside their homes. For nearly four decades following the war, however, such women were typically advised to "volunteer" community service. In 1952, Mirla Greenwood Thayne suggested that women in "the afternoon of life" (after child-rearing) might paint a picture, garden, write, read or volunteer compassionate service in their neighborhoods (RSMag 39: 94-95). And in 1961, Alberta

Christensen told a Relief Society Conference that a wise older woman had "very little of what might be called leisure time." However, what hours or days occurred might be spent studying, making "lovely things" to " beautify the home" or in "the giving of oneself" through "kindness to the homebound" or other voluntary service (RSMag 48: 148-149).

In 1967, the Relief Society Magazine urged the Mormon woman to volunteer in programs "which touch her children and community." In so doing, she would be an example of "service" and "love for others" (54: 35). And in 1970, the Magazine admitted that while "a woman's chief and most important work is in the home with her family," it was also true that every woman needed "outside interests." However, the Magazine observed that what woman especially needed was "a God-given way to use the charitable talent with which she is endowed." And the article concluded that, "Relief Society is the organization God has established to enable women to serve and to be guided in those channels wherein they can fill the full measure of their creation" (57: 171). Commercial employment was not considered.

In a similar vein, in 1979 the "Church News" observed that after a woman raised her family, she should use her remaining years profitably: "extra classes at school" and "charitable pursuits in which she may help the sick, read to the blind, assist the aged, possibly

influence for good those who are delinquent" (15 Sept 1979, p. 20). Again, no mention was made of profitable employment for the Sisters.

Because favorable economic conditions prevailed for several years after World War II, a single income supported most so-called, middle-class homes. Volunteer service was praised in the secular as well as the Mormon press; and women volunteered by the thousands. Later, however, after the economy deteriorated, most authoritative Mormon discourse still ignored woman's interest in or need to work.

The Contemporary Image

Until the most recent "woman's movement" caught fire, the Mormon Church was not far different from the rest of postwar American society in proscribing employment for women. Since 1970, however, the Church has retreated deeper into the sanctity of home and motherhood while much of the rest of the nation has accepted expanded options for women. For example, in 1971 Apostle Thomas S. Monson equated much of woman's "liberation" with woman's "deception," and denounced "free child care" and "equal employment" as "evils" of "the woman's movement" (Ensign Jan. 1971, p. 17).

In 1977, the "Church News" implied that female "hard hats" lost their "femininity"; and the same editorial asserted that working women were probably responsible for juvenile delinquency, broken marriages,

and ultimately a "handicapped new generation such as we have never before seen in America" (21 May 1977, p. 16). In 1978, a divorced mother asked the Ensign if she should work to support her children or go on welfare. And in spite of the Mormon work ethic, she was told to remain at home if possible (Mar. 1978, p. 19).

In 1979, Sister Sydney Smith Reynolds observed that while it might be possible to combine homemaking with another career, it was a difficult choice which she "could not make in good conscience." Reynolds also said that too many women sold "their motherhood for a mess of appliances and status symbols" (Ensign Oct. 1979, pp. 67-68). That same year, Relief Society President Barbara B. Smith termed orthodox women "Makers of Homes." She also said, "If we have marriage for eternities, we must abide by the laws of heaven" which are "supremely just." Smith analyzed those laws as follows: "There may be exceptions but the pattern is clear: an ideal home has both a mother-homemaker and a father-provider" (Ensign Mar. 1979, p. 22).

Also in 1979, the Church published its most definitive text on woman's issues, a book titled Woman. Fifteen General Authorities addressed "those questions which trouble women most in these latter days"; and several essays included the question of work. For example, Elder David B. Haight explained that Adam's responsibility was to support the family and Eve was to bear children.

Haight also observed that, "When mother is needed, she is needed right now, not in a couple of hours, or a few minutes" (Woman, p. 8).

In the most authoritative essay in that text, Church President Spencer W. Kimball wrote that woman's role was created for her by God, "according to his own plan"; and she should fill that assignment. Kimball also said that God intended the male to " . . . till the ground, support the family, and give proper leadership; the woman to cooperate, bear the children and rear and teach them" (Woman, p. 80). If Kimball intended women to work outside their homes at any time, he did not say so.

Counselor N. Eldon Tanner was more specific, claiming that woman's God-given domestic role was complete in every way: A woman's duties as:

> . . . a wife, a mother, a homemaker, a sister, a sweetheart, or a good neighbor, . . . can satisfy her need to express her talents, her interests, her creativity, dedication, energy, and skills, which so many seek to satisfy outside the home. . . .
>
> A woman will find greater satisfaction and joy and make a greater contribution to mankind by being a wise and worthy mother raising good children than she could make in any other vocation. (Woman, pp. 6; 9)

In 1981, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson observed that "Adam was instructed to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow--not Eve." Benson also asserted that, "Contrary to conventional wisdom, a mother's place is in the home." He warned against the "beguiling voices" that cry out for "alternative life-styles for women." And Benson concluded that, "Children need more of mother than of money"; and

women were not wise to disrupt their parenting to "prepare educationally and financially for an unseen eventuality" (Ensign Nov. 1981, pp. 104-107).

The following year, Apostle Benson lamented that only 14 percent of all American families met the ideal of two parents living together with their children where the father was the sole breadwinner and the mother a full-time homemaker. Benson also noted that women comprised nearly 50 percent of the total work force, with 56 percent leaving preschool children and 60 percent leaving teenagers at home. And Benson observed that, "No society will long survive without mothers who care for their young" (Ensign Nov. 1982, p. 59).

In 1983, Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency told girls "now is the time to train yourselves for possible future responsibility." But Hinckley concluded that woman's real responsibility is "bearer and nurturer of children" while " . . . the man is the provider and protector. No legislation can alter the sexes" (SLTrib. 25 Sept. 1983: B-1). In addition, the 1984 Relief Society Course of Study observed that it took faith for young women to bear children instead of working, "especially" when young husbands were still finishing their schooling (20). That essay completely ignored the problem of income for married students--an oversight that suggests naivete or an elitist authorship. In addition, no Mormon discourse tells men to remain with the children

while wives finish their degrees, although some women are now permitted to work under some conditions.

Increased divorce within the Church, growing numbers of single women, and worsening economic conditions correlate with increasing numbers of Sisters in the work force. In addition, truly needy women receive qualified approval to work. In 1978, Church President Spencer Kimball said,

> The Lord knows . . . that through circumstances beyond their control, some mothers are faced with the added responsibility of earning a living. These women have God's blessing for he knows of their anguish and their struggle. (Ensign Nov. 1978, p. 103)

In addition, the President's wife, Camilla Eyring Kimball, authored the most frequently quoted statement in contemporary discourse:

> I would hope that every girl and woman . . . has the desire and ambition to qualify in two vocations--that of homemaking, and that of preparing to earn a living outside the home, if and when the occasion requires. (Ensign Mar. 1977, p. 59).

However, in the foregoing both President Kimball and his wife suggest that while a woman might be forced to work, she would not really choose it.

In 1979, Relief Society President Barbara B. Smith admitted that, "All women cannot stay in the home but must seek employment to supplement or supply the family income" (Ensign Nov. 1979, p. 108). And that same year, President Kimball observed that as families were raised, women might use the "talents God has given" in "additional service to mankind" (Ensign Nov. 1979, p. 103). Kimball did not

elaborate on the women's use of their talents, however; and the term "service" suggests volunteer efforts rather than paid employment.

The most supportive statement concerning woman's work comes from Apostle Marvin J. Ashton. In the text titled Woman, Ashton wrote that women were capable and should be allowed to pursue their interests on either "a paid or volunteer basis." He also said that a woman should feel "free to go into the marketplace and into community service" when circumstances allow her to do so "without impairment" to her family. And Ashton concluded that, "The woman whose life is well ordered may and should work for the benefit of both her community and her family" (86-93). However, woman's need to work for self benefit was not stressed.

In 1980, Barbara Smith seemed to follow Ashton's lead when she said, "The decision of a mother to go to work outside her home is an individual matter. . . . For some women working is a right decision at a certain time; for others it is not" (Anderson Sunstone, p. 15). However, in 1982 Smith's approval appeared more qualified:

> There are times . . . under unusual circumstances, when in order to help provide for even the basic needs of her family, a mother may be required to accept employment outside her home. (Ensign May 1982, p. 79)

The foregoing all suggest that while Church leaders are expanding woman's options, few claim that woman has a right to work to satisfy her own interests and needs.

Instead, those in highest authority consistently state that most women should not work unless their financial situation demands it; and the Mormon woman's employed image is currently somewhat tarnished.

Summary: The Sisters' Secular Image

The Mormon woman's secular image is built on the belief that she should not do anything outside her home to compromise her required, domestic efforts. She is encouraged to obtain both homemaking and marketable skills; but she should not pursue a demanding profession if she plans to marry, and she should plan to marry. Except for emergencies, she should not work outside her home if she has children; and she should have children. This domestic assignment is primarily enhanced by the claim that God wants it so. In addition, however, domesticity is said to satisfy all the Sisters' needs, safeguard society, and serve children best. On the other hand, many working women are defined as selfish, deceitful and irresponsible. Finally, Mormon women are told not to support legislation that threatens the traditional family or gender-based roles.

The foregoing images differ from nineteenth century Mormon ideals in the following ways: Many nineteenth century Sisters questioned existing legislation and demanded woman's voice in government. In addition, many nineteenth century women worked full or part-time outside their homes; but their work was approved because

(a) the pioneering communities needed many resources; (b) a large percentage of Church families had substandard incomes; and (c) woman's extra-domestic efforts were approved as work that built up the kingdom of God. The most interesting difference between nineteenth and twentieth century images, however, lies in the unique definitions of woman's role that nineteenth century women proposed. Some of those Sisters denied the necessity of a domestic assignment for all women; and their discourse approved secular options which late twentieth century discourse does not.

Note should also be made of a conflicting ideal: Throughout its history, the Church has praised both women who abandon secular success for homemaking and those who achieve extraordinary goals. Thus a few preeminent women are lauded as examples of freedom within the doctrine as well as woman's initiative and talent. Mormon women like Senator Paula Hawkins of Florida, Supreme Court Justice Christine Durham of Utah, and Neuro-Radiologist Anne Osborn (Pohlman) are currently used as proselyting symbols of what Mormon women can do. (Such promotion seems inappropriate in the case of Dr. Osborn, however, who joined the Church after she joined her profession.)

On the other hand, more praise, and more opportunity for praise, goes to the large number of talented women who decline or abandon a career for homemaking. Such women are repeatedly cited in Church

discourse; and because their numbers are great and their values approved, they are the pervading role models. An early, much noted example was Grand Opera Star Emma Lucy Gates who ultimately abandoned her career for marriage to Albert E. Bowen, later an apostle in the Church. Light Opera Singer and County Recorder Jessie Evans abandoned her careers when she married Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith.

Sara Tanner met her husband Eldon when both were teachers. He later became a successful businessman, government official and then General Authority in the Church. However, while most teachers would not describe their work in such terms, Sara was publically praised for "dropping the playthings" of her life and "rising" to her husband's "requirements" (IE June 1970, pp. 118-121). As a final, popular example, Freda Joan Jensen, Director of Elementary Education for a large school district, visiting university instructor, council and committeewoman, later became best known as the second wife of Apostle Harold B. Lee (IE May 1970, pp. 60-61). Apostles Smith and Lee subsequently served as Presidents of the Mormon Church, while Tanner served in four First Presidencies. Thus, three of the foregoing women married men who were more prominent than themselves and consequently received increased public attention.

A final, more representative example is located in the discourse describing Sister Phyllis Firmage. When

Lorena Fletcher was American Mother for 1965, the Improvement Era described her amazing family as follows: Son James C. was President of the University of Utah (and later became Director of NASA). Son Stephen was Vice-President of Western Electric Corporation in New York. Son Robert was Vice-President of Sandia Corporation in Albuquerque. Son Harvey J., Jr., was Professor of Mathematics at BYU and active with the Apollo Project. And son Paul was Manager of the Quantum Physics Division of the Electrical Optical System in Pasadena. However, daughter Phyllis, " . . . who probably would have gone on to higher educational degrees, settled for a master's degree in mathematics and a degree of excellence as wife, mother, and homemaker" (IE Aug. 1965, pp. 681; 683). Others are encouraged to do the same.

Concerning that same issue, the Church allegedly supports women's growth more than do other cultures. In 1978, President Kimball contended that, "Perhaps more than any other people of like size, we are deeply committed to the development of the skills and talents of our sisters" (Ensign, May 1978, pp. 5-6). However, other authoritative statements support male egos and male options at the expense of opportunities for women. For example, in 1979 President Kimball said that women should not earn the living " . . . except in unusual circumstances. Men ought to be men indeed and earn the living under normal circumstances" (Ensign Mar. 1979, p. 4; emphasis added).

The foregoing suggests that working women threaten "real" men; and Apostle Benson supported that conclusion when he told BYU students that, "Men are the providers, and it takes the edge off your manliness when you have the mother of your children also be a provider" (Anderson Sunstone, p. 15).

Finally, the Church aligns itself with conservative factions and supports legislation which maintains the traditional, gender-based roles. In 1939, the Church Historian inserted the following editorial from the Salt Lake Telegram into the Journal History of the Church: "Reverence for motherhood, salvage of disintegrating sensibilities of refinement and normal instinct of race preservation demand retention of discriminatory legislation" (5 Aug. 1939, p. 2). Currently, authoritative discourse denounces the Equal Rights Amendment as a threat to the nuclear family and to existing female "rights."

Relief Society President Barbara B. Smith concluded that the Equal Rights Amendment would release men from the obligation to support their wives and family, enable more fathers to gain custody of their children, destroy women's privacy, insure women's conscription and combat assignment, and in other ways "abolish women's rights" (qtd. O. McConkie 92). Apostle Neal A. Maxwell observed that many ERA supporters "are unisex and anti-family" and their interests might prevail after

ratification. He offered, as an example, the likelihood that the ERA might confer inappropriate "privileges or status" on homosexuals. And Maxwell concluded that passage would "damage and disrupt the family garden" which is "still the best place to grow happy humans" (qtd. O. McConkie 94).

The First Presidency, itself, was "convinced" that ratification would "demean women rather than ennoble them." They asserted that the proposal would "threaten the stability of the family which is a creation of God" ("Statement" 12 Oct. 1978). And they concluded that it would restrain and repress women at the same time that it "stifled" many of their "God-given feminine instincts" (Ensign Dec. 1976, p. 79). Thus that most authoritative body of Mormon men officially and "unequivocally urged" the Church to "reject" the Equal Rights Amendment ("The Church and the Proposed Equal Rights Amendment," p. 23). No prominent or authoritative Mormon women have challenged this position in the mass media since Sonja Johnson in 1980. In addition, few Mormon women hold significant government positions in which to represent what might be their variant political interests. In government office, as in commerce, the Sisters have no fully sanctioned role.

Notes

[1] According to the May 1920 Relief Society Magazine, women property owners voted under this Charter from 1691 until 1780 (8: 225).

[2] When Reed Smoot and the Mormon Church were on trial in Washington, D.C., 1904-1907, Lockwood was one of the attorneys hired by the Church for their defense.

[3] For a thorough account of the suffrage debate, see Jean Bickmore White, "Woman's Place Is in the Constitution: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Utah in 1895," Utah Historical Quarterly, 42(Fall 1974): 344-369.

[4] Ten Salt Lake County candidates ran "at large" for five seats. Dr. Cannon was one of five Democrats, and Stake President Cannon was one of five Republicans. Both could have won or both lost. However, the Democrats enjoyed a clean sweep, with Mattie Hughes Cannon running well behind her party. Nonetheless, much was made at the time of Cannon's "defeat by his wife."

[5] For additional information concerning women in the Utah Legislature, see Delila M. Abbott, "Women Legislators of Utah, 1896-1976."

[6] Because of an error in binding the copy, page 409 may appear near the beginning of Volume 12 of the Journal of Discourses. Regarding the statement quoted, the Church is currently distinguished for perpetuating this strong work ethic.

[7] This substitution of "scribble" for woman's "writing" is a typical devaluation of woman's work.

CHAPTER VI

THE MORMON WOMAN'S DOMESTIC IMAGE

At the same time that woman suffrage was made part of the proposed Utah State Constitution, the Deseret News asserted that "The New Woman" should claim her place among men as "the gentle maiden, the honored wife, the revered mother, and in the hereafter the queenly position to which she is heir as the daughter of God" (JH 16 May 1895, pp. 2-3). With the exception of a celestial "queen," the News thus rearticulated woman's traditionally approved roles of "virgin," "wife," and "mother." These dimensions of the Mormon woman's image have been most enduring and became completely encompassing following World War II. The following analysis will therefore consider orthodox courtship, marriage, motherhood and homemaking roles for Mormon women.

Young Adult Women and Courtship

Discourse concerning young adults of typical "courting" age is particularly interesting because it discloses the ideals that each sex holds (or is told to hold) for the other. In addition, such discourse frequently explains methods for attracting the opposite

sex and suggests the status and value of one sex compared with the other.

Dominance and Attraction

Mormons, like most other cultures, have historically defined men as naturally stronger, more aggressive, more logical and emotionally more stable than women. The Relief Society Bulletin summarized conventional perceptions when it noted that while "some" women were mentally, morally or physically superior to average men, the right man for that woman would be "just one or more degrees superior in intelligence and power to the superior woman" (Feb. 1914, p. 2).

In addition, Mormon boys and men have priesthood authority which enhances their political status. In 1925 the Young Woman's Journal quoted President Joseph F. Smith as follows: "The man is the head, the governing power, doubly so when he holds the priesthood . . . . In all home affairs and family matters there is no other authority paramount" (36: 710). Mormon girls are taught to respect these distinctions and let the males "take the lead."

The issue of direct versus indirect power needs to be considered, however. In 1893 the Young Woman's Journal observed that maturing boys feel "a new power" and assertiveness which girls do not (4: 519). But an earlier issue assured its readers that, "The weakness of . . . womanhood was her strength; it made her king of men" (1: 407). At another time, the Journal boasted that "Woman's

influence is all powerful: a woman can influence a man to almost anything if she knows how to proceed" (4: 281). And the same volume later observed that, "Women are magicians. . . . God . . . planted in woman the innate power of magic over man" (436). In addition, most Mormon discourse, like much secular discourse, still teaches girls ingratiation techniques so they can "influence" the "direct power" wielders.

In 1895 the Journal advised, "seek always to soften and to gently mould your brother or your father to quiet calmness and peaceful utterance" (7: 38). In 1906, the Journal claimed that, "Girls should be soft-toned and gentle, and exert an influence of refinement on their boy friends." That Journal also noted that "Real ladies avoid anything that attracts attention" (17: 369). In 1915, the same publication noted that boys were "physically strong, brave, and masterful," but girls were "gentle and gracious, possessing the quality of sweet persuasiveness" (26: 130-131).

In a similar vein, the Deseret News observed in 1937 that it was " . . . pathetic when girls will be boys. They fail as girls and make themselves ridiculous as boys" (JHC 4 Sept. 1937, pp. 3-4). And earlier that same year, a News editorial titled "The Girl with Brains" explained that educated girls were not "ugly"--just apt to "intimidate" boys (JHC 3 June 1937, pp. 1-2). These

conventions of male dominance through "superiority" or "direct power" persist to the present.

Postwar images. For several years, the Improvement Era published a column titled "to a Teenage Girl." In May of 1960, girls were told:

> Be a real feminine person. Look like a girl at all times. Have a grace of movement, softness of voice, tenderness of feeling. . . . A fellow wants his girl to be finer and gentler than he. (361)

And in June of that same year, the Era reported a survey in which young men described the ideal girl as first of all good looking (474). In contrast, there was no advice column to coach boys in their efforts to attract girls. The implication is that boys either did not care, knew the skills, or were inherently attractive--in all cases dominant in the situation.

In 1965, the Improvement Era published parallel essays for girls and boys turning twelve (Jan. pp. 74-77). The first was titled, "Don't envy the girl with poise and purpose, be one." The second was, "Don't envy the boy with leadership skills, be one!" The enviable traits are not equivalent. "Poise" enables girls to cope gracefully with existing conditions; but "leadership" enables boys to change conditions. The contents of the two essays were not equivalent, either.

Elaine Cannon told girls they could manage stressful situations--praying in public, having their picture taken or meeting a new boy--by counting to ten. Thus readers learned that girls were stressed by trivial

experience. Matters of "purpose" could be managed by "studying a manners manual," "boning up on good games," "thumbing through a fashion magazine," or "stirring up a treat." In other words, while "purpose" typically suggests serious "goals," Cannon treated the girls' purpose as a problem of learning nonverbal ingratiation strategies and entertainment skills. She concluded by urging girls to exploit their best assets: "your eyes" and "smile" (IE Jan. 1965, pp. 74-75).

On the other hand, Elder Marion D. Hanks congratulated twelve-year-old boys because they were about to receive "the blessings of the priesthood," and mingle with "the bigger boys and the fine older men." He urged boys to develop leadership by being nice, more courteous to girls, praying, and upgrading their reading to scriptures and "Mormon classics." Boys also learned that turning twelve marked the beginning of their service to God and mankind (IE Jan. 1965, pp. 76-77). In analyzing the two essays, the girls' concerns and activities seem banal compared with the seriousness and dignity of the boys' tasks. The girls best qualities are "pretty" rather than "intellectual" or "spiritual." As a result, boys appear to deserve more respect than girls.

In 1969, the Improvement Era published parallel articles explaining what each sex liked in the other. In May, a panel of boys suggested that girls should let boys plan their dates and then "be happy with your plans. . . ,

appreciative and lively." A boy named "Bill" said, "If she wears long hair, it ought to be curled so she looks as if she cares." "Don" said he liked girls with "long blond hair." The rest of the group insisted that blonds should be " . . . natural blond. No dye jobs. No complicated comb outs. No hair spray. Natural." Thus girls learned that they should be agreeable, energetic, and have extraordinary hair which should somehow also be natural (61-62).

In October, the parallel article printed "Ann Carol's" claim that, "Most girls like to be dependent. They want the boy to be stronger than they are. They need this security." "Jeanneane" immediately said, "That's so true! Many times a girl will try to get her own way when she really doesn't want it. She's just waiting for the boy to make the decision." Jeanneane later claimed that, "Boys can be so sure of themselves in ways that girls don't have the power to be. We need the strength of the priesthood in making decisions" (IE Oct. 1969, pp. 49-50).

None of the girls on that panel volunteered interest in the boys' physical appearance until the moderator explicitly asked about hair styles. Even then, the girls had little concern over color or cut, and asked only for clean, neat hair. On the other hand, girls were concerned about their dates' honesty, consideration, and respect for Mormon ideals. In comparing the two articles, the boys were most interested in girls as sex objects;

while the girls valued men for their ethics and leadership--thus reflecting cultural conventions.

Pictures and illustrations in the Church magazines support the foregoing distinctions. Until late into the 1970s, Mormon boys were shown in physically-demanding activities while girls watched from the side or engaged in quiet interests. Boys were also depicted as taller and bigger than their female companions. Even the ads repeated the stereotypes. In 1970, the LDS Business College promoted its "College Life" with a picture taken at a prom. The tall man looked at something in the distance while his date smiled up at him (IE Feb. 1970, p. 57). Apparently the man found interests outside their relationship; but she attended to him even when he ignored her--suggesting unequal evaluations.

In its final year, the Improvement Era published a description of the "ideal girl" that was developed by a panel of "Preferred Men" (May 1970, pp. 44-45). These men had the "qualities girls hope for." They represented "the priesthood, the strength, the leadership, the security, the excitement, and the wisdom of the ideal boy." (None of those traits was associated with Mormon girls. They might now be termed "exciting"; but in 1970, that word had pejorative overtones for women in a courtship setting. Mormon mothers might be "wise," but not their college-age daughters. "Homes" and "mothers" provide security; and a relationship might be secure. But typically not girls.

"Strength" and "leadership" are "masculine" traits. And the "priesthood" in question belongs to Mormon males.)

The ideal men described their ideal partners as follows: "Steve" wanted a wife who would support him in "any" Church calling; "Tom" wanted a wife to support his "work and Church callings"; but "Joe" wanted his wife to support him "in everything." "Rene" wanted a women to love him "more than she loved herself." And "R.Q." wanted his wife to be "complementary rather than competitive." Thus men defined themselves as competent, assertive and "do-ers." Women were dependent, supportive and "helpers."

The New Era replaced the Improvement Era as a source of instruction for young adult Mormons; but the old stereotypes prevailed. In 1972, parallel essays defined ideal companions for courting Mormon youth. Stella Oaks advised girls to "look for potential" in addition to demonstrated social sensitivity, faith, intelligence, culture and ambition. (Oaks also thought that a "dashing" man would add a "touch of romance.") In contrast, DeWitt Paul advised boys to look for physical attractiveness in a women who would "ideally" be "a little younger than the man"; prepared to earn a living; but "primarily a homemaker" with motherhood her "highest priority" (NE Oct. 1972, pp. 38-39). Again, the ideal man had more admirable traits than the ideal woman.

A year earlier, a young woman asked the New Era what she should do at nineteen having "never had a date."

She was told, " . . . cry a lot--which is probably one of the healthiest emotional releases under the circumstances" (June 1971, p. 44). In contrast, in the same body of discourse, young men did not complain that women rejected them; and no one addressed the possibility of profound male sorrow over that situation. Such discrepancies suggest that men do not really need women as much as women need men.

As recently as 1981, lesson manuals for Mormon preteenagers still fostered the foregoing biases. Lavina F. Anderson noted that girls in the manuals were not depicted as striving for any sustained intellectual or scholastic achievement, and there were no female missionaries. Only boys participated in sports or saved lives. When girls encountered emergencies, they prayed and phoned for help (Anderson EII, p. 1). And in 1980, the New Era also observed that boys should help girls with their coats, car doors, down theatre aisles, and "over stormy paths" so both parties will "feel good about themselves" (Mar., p. 32). As Anderson observed, " . . . the girls, unlike the boys, do not solve their own problems." Given conventional values, the male therefore "dominates" as the more competent person.

Young Women and Chastity

Until recently, similar images of male dominance have pervaded most Western cultures. However, most cultures have also concluded that men could not exercise

the same self-control in sexual relations as the women. Whether that assumption is correct or not, Mormons demand the same level of sexual morality from boys as from the girls. In 1952, President David O. McKay announced, "Boys and girls alike should hold inviolate their chastity" (JHC 11 May 1952, pp. 3-4). And four years later the Improvement Era asserted that the Church had "but one single standard, and it is just as important for young men to keep themselves chaste as it is for young women" (June 1956, p. 396).

In addition, as sexual mores relaxed in other societies following World War II, Mormon discourse concerning chastity increased in volume and intensity. Harold T. Christensen concludes that statements about chastity have become more explicit; the rhetoric has grown stronger; the audience has been somewhat redefined; and specific themes have been reprioritized (Rytting and Rytting 21). On the other hand, men are still seen as those most likely to sin through homosexual relationships; women are still defined as the guardians of, or threats to, a dating couple's morality; and women still pay the higher price for sin.

In 1916, Church President Joseph F. Smith and his counselors identified the following concerns: Young people of that day were threatened by "the deadly contagion of Babylon" found in the "depravity" of most dancing, in frivolity and in "dissipating pleasures"; and the females

followed the "demoralizing fashions of the world." The First Presidency also claimed that "the most important phases" of their requested "reformatory labor" related to "our girls and women" (RSMag 4: 36-37). Most subsequent discourse on moral courtship incorporates these perceptions.

During the Flapper Era, the Young Woman's Journal worried that girls, who were supposed to exert "uplifting and refining" influence over their boy friends, were setting bad examples (32: 173). This allocation of responsibility is as old as Eden; but the degree of transgression, as well as responsibility, has also been involved. In 1857, Heber C. Kimball announced that any endowed, adulterous Mormon woman would be more "worthy to be slain" than her Johnston's Army lover because she had committed the greater sin (JD 6: 38). On the other hand, Old Testament laws found both man and woman equally guilty in adultery.

Much authoritative Mormon discourse still focuses on woman's responsibility for men's morality. In 1960, the Improvement Era stated: "Girls, it is up to you to set the standard of the date. Don't let things get out of hand" (Feb. 1960, p. 122). In 1967, the "Church News" confessed that while people usually think of boys as being "strong," in dating situations " . . . the girls must be the stronger of the two . . . . If the girls fall they drag boys down into the depths with themselves" (11 March 1967,

p. 16). And ten years later, Apostle David B. Haight admitted that "the young ladies have a profound influence on young men"; and he charged them to become " . . . the real guardians of their morality. You can. You must" (Ensign Nov. 1977, p. 56).

While woman's responsibility for man's morals remains constant, "acceptable" behavior reflects social change. In 1890, the Young Woman's Journal warned readers that a lady should not let a man casually "touch her face, pat her on the shoulder, nor stroke her hair" (1: 315). In 1904, girls were advised not to wink their eyes, cross their legs, use slang, chew gum or tap their foot to rhythm (YWJ 15: 576-577). And in 1908, the Journal explained that "young ladies" should not go "buggy-riding" late at night; let a man "stroll" with his arm around her waist, or pull or swing her about. A "kiss" was a "sacred" thing (19: 330-332).

Brigham Young enjoyed dancing, himself, and encouraged the practice among the Saints. However, in 1896 Church leaders advised against "round dancing" (YWJ 7: 240-241). In 1912 the First Presidency condemned the "close" embraces and "suggestive movements" of the popular dances of the day (MFP 4: 281). And in 1918 the Journal fretted over the "bad music, suggestive and vulgar movements . . . , close position, improper clothing, unlighted rooms, late hours" and other ills of the public

dance halls where many prison inmates began "their downward career" (24: 592-593).

Church leaders also criticized "jitter-bugging" during the Second World War; and they have attacked "surfing," "jerking," "rock," "punk" and "new wave" sounds and dances ever since. In addition, Apostle Delbert L. Stapley lamented in 1956 that " . . . cars and drive-in theaters can and do become brothels of sin to young couples alone in such darkened surroundings, with doors closed and windows up" (RSMag 43: 718-719). However, nothing has drawn so much fire over so long a period of time as the women's choices in fashion.

Women must dress modestly. A hundred and fifty years of public and authoritative commentary on fashion can be briefly summarized: Men criticize women's fashions and tell women how to dress; but the reverse is never true. Mormon men have typically been angered by women's expensive clothing; bothersome items (large hats are an example); and suggestive or seductive attire. Mormon women have condemned those same "faults" in their own clothing. In addition, the Sisters have also considered the desirability of dressing in high fashion; problems of fabrication; utility; health and safety considerations ("tight lacing" is an example); and freedom of movement as standards for selecting clothing. However, this analysis will focus on issues of "orthodox" and "moral" dressing.

In 1872, Church President Brigham Young described a party at which a woman was dressed "in the height of fashion" with trains dragging and little but "a band over the shoulder to the waist." One man, referring to the woman, asked his male friend if he had ever seen "the like"; and the second responded "never since I was weaned" (JD 15: 39). Authoritative Mormon women also promoted modest fashions. In 1906, the Young Woman's Journal asserted that a proper street dress would have no feature that would "draw special attention to the wearer." And girls were told not to wear blouses "so thin and underwear so low-cut" that their skin showed "plainly through" (17: 88-91).

In practice, however, many Mormon women have adopted the secular fashions; and in 1912 the First Presidency observed:

> The shameless exhibitions of the human form purposely presented in modern styles of dress, or rather undress, are indications of that sensuous and debasing tendency toward moral laxity and social corruption which have hurried nations into irretrievable ruin. (MFP 4: 281)

Four years later, President Joseph F. Smith described women's fashions as "obscene," "uncleanly," "impure," and "abominable"--clothes that would reduce Mormon women "to the level of the courtesan on the street" (CR Oct. 1915, p. 7). The foregoing heavy rhetoric responded to rising skirts, lowered bodices and increasingly bared arms for evening.

These changes in style posed particular problems to the Sisters who had received their endowments and therefore wore a special undergarment. As Apostle George F. Richards explained, this garment was patterned after the original which the Lord made for Adam and Eve and which was "worn to the neck, also to the wrists and to the ankles"--thus indicating what body parts the Lord permitted exposed (YWJ 27: 323-324). However, although the LDS "garment" was to be worn by endowed men and women at all times, it did not fit under the Sisters' new-styled gowns. Nevertheless, enough fashion-conscious Mormon women removed or altered the garment, or declined to receive their endowments, that the Church became alarmed.

In 1915, an article titled "How to Get Married" admitted that some young women were not marrying in Mormon temples "because they cannot dress afterwards as they would like to." Readers also learned, however, that no stalwart man would marry such a woman, "no matter how much he loved her" (YWJ 26: 351). Six years later, the Journal told the younger girls that it was just as necessary for them to "keep their bodies covered" as it was for married women. And the author asked them to "think seriously" about whether they preferred "'style' to Godliness" (32: 714). This battle between orthodox dressing and fashion has continued to the present, with the undergarment becoming increasingly abbreviated, lighter in weight, and

more lacy in appearance. However, each new cycle of skimpy fashion provokes a cycle of angry response.

Church leaders are not concerned over the problem of the "garment" alone, however. The relationship of fashion to chastity is more easily discussed in public and more often addressed. A 1913 Deseret Evening News editorial claimed that the women's new fashions were "frightful," an "awful influence over the young men," and women who wore them were "temptresses" (8 Oct., p. 4). And in 1916, Apostle George F. Richards claimed that when girls dressed in the low fashions of the day, the results were "disastrous." However, Richards also asked young women to "have high ideals, above the animal in man"--suggesting that men were not as capable of moral behavior as women (YWJ 27: 323-324).

That same year, Church President Joseph F. Smith and his counselors officially complained that while they had "vigorously condemned" the practice of "indecent dressing, . . . little improvement" had occurred (MFP 5: 39). When flappers appeared after World War I, the Church responded with formal policy. In April of 1921, the Young Woman's Journal decried the "low necks, the high heels, the bedeviltries of knee-high skirts." And in September, the Journal printed Mormon standards for Church schools which added the following: no party dresses; extreme hair dress; rouge; lipstick; thin materials; open, loose sweaters; lace stockings; hosettes; silk stockings or

high-heeled shoes and slippers. Interestingly, expensive silk socks and silk shirts were also barred for Mormon boys--an unusual restriction of privilege, though not associated with the men's morality (YWJ 32: 526).

Despite these injunctions, both boys and girls followed high fashion, although some young men complained. In July of 1921, the Journal printed a letter from a "traveling Missionary in England" who insisted that "only the vile and worthless care to see ladies dressed in an immodest way" (32: 443-444). The elder also asked if the YLMIA couldn't institute some kind of reform; and five months later, "a college man" indicted the women again:

> Mentally I am unclean. Why? Because the women I know will not let me be clean. . . . Wherever we go we find them, clad in their waists of net or gauze like silk that show bare arms, bare shoulders, and lingerie. Their skirts are short and light and every passing breeze exposes to the knees daintily turned limbs clad in the sheerest of silk or lisle hose which are often striped or marked in other conspicuous ways. Very often the girl miscalculates the capacity of her skirts. . . . What is a fellow going to do? . . . Fashions in women's clothes are still set by women who are working at the old game. There certainly is a need of change. (YWJ 32: 690-691)

By today's standards, the foregoing presents an attractive picture in rather charming, and appreciative, prose.

The "college man" claimed the contrary, however. His first lament, "What is a fellow going to do," releases men from responsibility and makes women the guardians of men's virtue. His second claim that women "set" their own fashion displays a cultural bias that women create fashions; whereas most designers, advertisers and jobbers

were and are men. And his conclusion that women are "still" working the old "game" probably refers to the seductress image passed down from the Old Testament. These ideas persist to the present time, but intensify during periods of unacceptable fashions.

In 1946, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith claimed that modern dress was contrary to the Lord's wishes, and Mormon men were "not pleased, not at all" (RSMag 33: 807). In 1948 the Relief Society Magazine earnestly promoted loose clothing and skirts that covered the knees (35: 106-107). Apostle Spencer W. Kimball decried topless gowns; and in 1957, Apostle Harold B. Lee also criticized the "semi-nudity" that prevented a temple marriage (CR Apr. 1957, p. 24). When mini-skirts appeared in the 1960s, the Church responded with added alarm.

In 1967, the "Church News" complained that " . . . many of our women now feel obliged not only to display their badly shaped knees, but their thighs as well." The unsigned editorial also contended that "clean-minded men" were "thoroughly disgusted" and "wholesome boys" were "fighting to keep their minds off sex" (23 Sept. 1967, p. 16). The writer must have been motivated by something other than moral concerns to insert that observation on aesthetics into the essay. Other assertions were more typical: orthodox Mormon men were offended by women's seductive efforts.

That same year, Apostle Mark E. Petersen said that LDS women had "followed the fashions of the day like sheep." He told the Sisters that they were "not made lovely" by short skirts; and he, too, charged that "many a boy" had lost his virtue because indecent exposure had "started him on his way down." Petersen concluded that, "No woman--certainly no Latter-day Saint woman, has the right to tempt any young man" (RSMag 54: 730-731). In 1971, Dallin H. Oaks followed the same reasoning and asserted that "the immodest dresses" worn by Mormon women of all ages contributed to the "immorality of this age." Oaks also noted that such "partly uncovered" women "flaunted temptation" before the "young men" (NE Dec., pp. 47-48).

Important biases are evident in the foregoing. First, the men did not suggest that young women might be brought to lust by the way the men dressed or acted; and few Church leaders discuss that possibility. Instead, young men are typically encouraged to protect girls' virtue but not accused of doing wrong. The following from Apostle Melvin J. Ballard is representative of some of the harshest public discourse directed towards the males:

> The boy who would deliberately look upon a clean, chaste, and pure girl to rob her of her virtue is almost as guilty as though he contemplated sending a knife into her heart to destroy her; for when she loses her virtue she loses that which is more precious than life itself. (CR Apr. 1929, p. 69)

Here Ballard talks about intent but assumes no action.

In contrast, a 1983 Priests lesson manual provides more moderate and more typical advice to young men: They should "respect a girl's virtue" by "avoiding physical intimacies" (Course A, p. 25). Thus young men are encouraged to do right but not accused of doing wrong or criticized for seductive behavior. In contrast, girls are accused of intentionally flaunting temptation before the young men; and the implications of such discourse are two: Men do not tempt women, and thus may be more moral; and girls' virtue is not really as valuable as boys' virtue.

In 1965, the Church published official dress standards under the title, "For the Strength of Youth" (IE Sept. pp. 832-835). Girls' clothing was not to call attention to the body; skirts should be lose-fitting and cover the knees. Dresses should not be cut low at the top; and thin strapped tops were never acceptable. Girls and women might wear loose-fitting slacks, which covered the knees, while working in the yard, hiking, camping or participating in active sports. But pants were not to be worn in public; bikinis and two-piece swimsuits "should never be worn"; and swim attire was for swimming and beaching only. Finally, girls were told that they should "always try to look feminine" and not "dress like boys or try to give a masculine appearance."

Regulations concerning men's fashions were fewer. Boys were asked not to wear "extremely tight fitting pants" and to wear "appropriate trousers and shirts" while

driving in cars or working outside. Shorts were appropriate "during actual participation in active sports." And boys were to match the formality of the occasion with the formality of their clothes.

The 1965 directives also considered hair styles for men and women. Girls were to choose a "natural hairdo" and not wear their curlers in public. (Since the fashion required large rollers, setting gels, "back-combing" and spraying, no "fashionable" female looked "natural.") On the other hand, young men were told that their hair should not be "too long"; and this concern reflects an unusual loss of freedom for Mormon males. In 1971, the New Era advised:

> Beards are not acceptable. Moustaches are not encouraged, but if worn should be trimmed above the corners of the mouth. Long or bushy side burns are not acceptable. Hair must be styled so as not to cover the ears and must be above the collar in the back. (Sept., p. 18)

For over fifteen years, bearded or long-haired men were typically not allowed into temples nor called to positions of authority. Male missionaries and students at the Church universities looked like Marine inductees. Currently these standards have relaxed very slightly; but the underlying rationale concerning male and female "appearance" remains the same.

In 1969, the Improvement Era observed that Mormon boys should "look like 'examples of the believer'" (Apr., p. 51). Three years later, the Relief Society Magazine told women that "the key to proper dress is modesty"; and

clothing that provoked "lust" was "clearly unsuitable" (57: 627). Thus men were asked to enhance their image as Mormon males, while women were told to appear "modest" and asked once again not to tempt the men. Their own images seemed of less concern than their effect on the opposite sex, and this discrepancy suggests discrepant evaluations for men and women.

Aspects of moral purity. As a final consideration, young people have been asked to avoid "necking, petting, intimacies, and improprieties of every kind" because "virtue must never be placed in jeopardy" (IE Sept. 1965, p. 835). In addition, discourse historically stressed the fearfulness of sin over the consolation of forgiveness; and Church members have good cause for fear. The Book of Mormon teaches that adultery is next to murder in the sight of God; and contemporary leaders claim that other "sex crimes" are of equal magnitude.

In 1941, Church President Heber J. Grant claimed: "There is no true Latter-day Saint who would not rather bury a son or daughter than to have him or her lose his or her virtue. . . " (IE Feb., p. 73). In 1942, the First Presidency asserted that the Lord had drawn " . . . no essential distinction between fornication, adultery, and harlotry or prostitution" (qtd. O. McConkie 111). And a Circular Letter that year ranked related Church values as follows: "Better dead, clean, than alive, unclean" (MFP 6: 150).

In 1945, the "Church News" produced "An Open Letter to Girls and Young Men" (note the difference in titles) which read in part: "Virtue is dearer than life itself. 'Better dead clean than alive unclean' is the message of the Church to every person" (6 Jan. 1945, p. 1). In 1965, President McKay reminded Church members, " . . . next to the crime of murder comes that of adultery and sexual unchastity" (IE Sept. 1965, p. 756). In 1967, the Magazine explained that ranking as follows: because neither murder nor incontinence could be reversed, those were "the two most serious sins" (54: 74). And Apostle Mark E. Petersen warned, "when you lose your chastity you lose just about everything" (RSMag 54: 731).

Petersen later said that because immorality was next to murder and "sex sin" was an "abomination in the sight of God," then: " . . . every right thinking person should be willing even to die if necessary in defense of virtue, whether that death be physical or social" (IE June 1969, p. 79). Petersen's Conference address was printed in the Improvement Era in June of 1969 where President McKay also warned Church members, "Keep your chastity above everything else!" (3). Roughly ten years later, President Spencer W. Kimball reminded New Era readers that, "The Lord and His church condemn in no uncertain terms any and every sex relationship outside of marriage" (Nov. 1980, p. 41).

The foregoing does not discriminate on the basis of gender; but other discourse implies that the practical consequences of fornication are probably worse for girls than for boys. In 1929, the Young woman's Journal noted that while men would "make a plaything" out of some girls, they carefully selected a wife with "higher ideals" (40: 555). The implication here is that the man is not regarded as a "playboy," and his options have not been lessened by his past.

Along those same lines, Apostle Spencer W. Kimball explained the results of premarital sex by recounting a story concerning a high school girl who became promiscuous to become popular. Later, however, she was abandoned by the boys " . . . to her misery, shame, bitterness, and aloneness . . . . Her life blasted. Damaged goods!" (IE Sept. 1965, p. 805). No subsequent mention is made of the "bad boys" who were party to her sins; but the unfortunate girl lost her marketability. The observation is standard.

In an apparent effort to teach the value of chastity, decades of classes have used an exercise in which the teacher circulated unwrapped gum, marshmallows, or all-day-suckers throughout the room. After the teenagers handled the goods, the teacher asked who wanted to eat a mauled item; and the point was made that few men would choose to marry a ruined girl. Preteens receive similar instruction (Anderson EII, p. 3). Teachers have also decorated false cakes of plastic foam, cardboard or

other similar materials. Dirt or garbage have been gift wrapped, bananas discolored and the skin carefully reclosed. In all such examples, "fallen" girls have been likened to a deceptive treat: unacceptable.

Similar "merchandise" similes for young men were less frequent and less intense in the materials surveyed. Instead, the following parable from the Young Woman's Journal is typical of discourse that takes the man's role into account:

> A traveler who went into a garden of beautiful roses . . . picked out a little white bud for his own. But while he was waiting for it to unfold he walked about smelling of the other flowers and touching their soft lovely petals. When he grew tired of this pastime he returned to his own white bud, and lo, it had opened. It stood the whitest and most fragrant flower in the garden, and its heart was the dewiest and most tender. But he could not appreciate the beauty because he had destroyed his power of appreciation by handling and smelling of the other roses which now were broken or spoiled because of his handling. (38: 710)

More recently members of the Aaronic Priesthood learned that a girl was like a "white gardenia" and should be returned "fresh and sweet" from a date, not "brown and shriveled" (Teachers Study Course, Series A 1976, p. 48).

The foregoing suggest that the worst penalty for the transgressing man is loss of sensitivity and enjoyment. But the best result for the fallen women is obvious "blight" and reduced value. Other discourse is less encouraging. In 1893, the Young Woman's Journal warned, "That dreadful step . . . once taken . . . can never be retraced." Nor could sinners ". . . ever entirely

wipe out the stain, but it follows them throughout their lives, no matter how good and true they may be ever after" (4: 525). And sixty years later, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency claimed that unmarried mothers could " . . . never quite outlive the stigma. . . ; memory lasts and scars the happiness of all the years that follow" (RSMag 39: 794-795).

Recent modifications. The contemporary Church is more moderate. In 1972, Apostle Boyd K. Packer told innocent sinners who had been tempted by powerful enticements that " . . . there is a great cleansing power. And know that you can be clean" (NE July 1972, p. 6). Other leaders have been even more generous. However, this softening over the last several years may not console those members who lost their virtue and wished they had died, instead.

The foregoing all suggest that while the same standards of chastity apply to Mormons of both sexes, the temporal results of transgression are unequal. In addition, constant warnings concerning the girls' marketability might influence Church members of both sexes to consider young women as commodities which need to meet men's standards. Since the reverse does not hold for men, however, "images" of chastity are not really equal for Mormon girls and boys. Finally, until the last decade, single women have carried a stigma which Mormon bachelors have not.

The Mormon Wife

"Only she can gain perfection
Who becomes a wife and mother."
(YWJ 32: 299)

For most of its history, the Church has claimed that marriage in mortal life is absolutely necessary for the highest blessings of the resurrection. Christ said that after the resurrection, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (D&C 132: 16). The Doctrine and Covenants clearly indicates that unmarried members will serve only as "ministering angels" in the hereafter; and single females will therefore never become "queens" and "priestesses" (D&C 131: 1-3; 132: 4-6 and 15-19). Apostle Erastus Snow warned, "No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her, if she is worthy to have a husband; and if not, somebody will receive her as a servant" (JD 5: 291). And Mormons believe that only those earthly marriages that are "sealed" by Melchizedek Priesthood authority will endure forever (D&C 132: 15).

Given the foregoing, polygamy was the means by which all Mormon women could marry a worthy man and obtain salvation. The law applies to monogamous marriage as well, however; and thirty years after the Manifesto, Rudger Clawson warned the Sisters that, "Every woman in the Church, of mature age, and worthiness, who is ambitious to attain to exaltation and glory hereafter, should be married" (JHC 3 Apr. 1921, pp. 9-10). Two generations

later, President David O. McKay said, "Let us look upon marriage as a sacred obligation" (IE June 1969, p. 5).

From about 1890 until the contemporary period, orthodox marriage was also permanent because the Lord had issued "a strong denunciation . . . against the evils of divorce and family disruption" (Ensign, Oct. 1975, p. 4). For the past two decades, the Church has granted a larger percentage of divorces, and for more reasons, than at any other time since the Manifesto. However, members are continually warned against the practice and told that righteousness prevents trouble.

In October Conference of 1975, President Spencer W. Kimball said, "We decry divorce and feel that there are relatively few divorces which are justifiable. . . . Selfishness and other sins are responsible for most divorces" (Ensign Nov. 1975, pp. 6-7). Six months earlier, the President specifically indicted women when he said:

> When women forget their pettiness and selfishness and submit themselves to their own righteous husbands as unto the Lord, and when they are subject to their husbands as the Church is expected to be subject to Christ, then will the divorce rate reduce. . . . (Ensign May 1975, p. 7)

Men were also advised to "come home to their families"; but no derogatory adjectives colored their intentions.

In addition to the necessary and enduring dimensions of marriage, the Church also claims that marriage is natural and fulfilling: In a woman's "happiest and highest dreams" she longs for her "crowning accomplishment" and "noblest fulfillment": wifehood (IE

May 1969, p. 52). This concern with personal happiness reflects a change in emphasis. In 1861 Brigham Young advised the Sisters not to "ask whether you can make yourselves happy, but whether you can do your husband's will, if he is a good man" (JD 9: 38).

In addition, for much of the nineteenth century marriage was defined as a social, rather than an interpersonal, relationship. Early leaders focused on the need for a strong family unit to help establish the kingdom of God on earth. Currently, the family is seen as the solution to most social problems and the defense against future social ills. However, the Church now respects the need for individual satisfaction--a major value of the twentieth century. Marriage is now regarded as both an interpersonal and a social relationship; and other changes are also apparent in the discourse.

For example, Church leaders have told the brethren to pay their wives both slight and significant attention. Woman has recently been told that her husband, as her eternal partner, deserves her first consideration. In contrast, for at least a generation surrounding World War II, women were told to place their children first. The following analysis will display these and other significant patterns in the image of the Mormon wife.

Nineteenth Century Definitions

The Mormon Church was organized during a period when most Americans believed in wifely subordination. In

1851, the Millennial Star announced that woman's name should not be known outside her home; man was "God's delegate," and the wife existed for her husband's "honour and glory," and to be "a crown and honour" to him (13: 359-360). As restrictive as that statement may now appear, it was consistent with the values advanced by Brigham Young, Heber Kimball, Jedediah Grant and other early Church leaders.

Orson Pratt was one of the first of such churchmen to publish his perception of wives. And, as noted in the earlier section concerning polygamy, Apostle Pratt concluded that any woman who wanted to marry should "submit herself wholly to her husband's counsel," and become his "property." In addition, Pratt claimed that a wife should obey her husband even when he was in error, rather than "rebel" by acting on her own judgment (Seer, p. 144).[1]

Thunder from the pulpit. The same year that Orson Pratt commenced his Seer essays, Church President Brigham Young chastised the women for trying to keep their husbands at their sides, for prying into the men's business, and for forgetting their proper place:

> Mothers, what do you want? Do you wish your husband to sit all the time in the parlor with you? Yes, and I suppose, by the conduct of some, you want to be seated over the head of God Almighty, to rule over Him and all His kingdoms. (JD 1: 67-68)

Young also explained proper relationships when he told the Sisters, "Should your husbands be called out to

fight the Indians, or go to the islands of the sea, . . . it is none of your business, when it is their calling to be away from home" (JD 1: 68). Apostle Lorenzo Snow recognized similar priorities when he told the Sisters to " . . . learn how you can best serve your husbands. . . . And you brethren, attend to those duties that pertain to your calling and Priesthood. . . . " (JD 5: 316; qtd. IE Jan. 1965, p. 26). These discrepant assignments have endured to the present time.

Many Priesthood-bearers were "called away from home" for extraordinary periods during the nineteenth century. Jane Sydner, wife of Franklin D. Richards, was alone ten of the first fifteen years of their marriage, while he served missions for the Church (Ensign Jan. 1980, 28). Leonora Cannon, wife of John Taylor, was alone nine out of eighteen years while he filled the same assignments (Ensign Feb. 1980, 52-53). In addition, during the nineteenth century, active Mormon men commonly spent a total of three to five years away from home in Church service.

In 1856, President Young told the men, "Elders, never love your wives . . . but that you can leave them at a moment's warning without shedding a tear" (JD 3: 360). Three months later, Young observed that the man was to be the "master of his own household" and other family members were to "say amen to what he says." And Young also noted that, "There is a curse upon the woman that is not upon

the man, namely, . . . 'He shall rule over you'" (JD 4: 556-557). The foregoing all remind Mormon men to focus their attention on church and community affairs, and to maintain their independence and power.

Brigham Young was not always harsh towards the women, however. He confessed that he did not know of any "worse" affliction than the "curse" put on "Mother Eve"; and he "would be glad if it were otherwise" (JD 16: 167). Young also recognized the complexity of marriage and admitted that "the whole subject" was not within his "reach" (JD 2: 90). In 1856, Young observed that a man should treat his family "as an angel would treat them" (JD 4: 55). On the other hand, Young's counselors during this same period consistently fired thunder at the women from the pulpit.

On 27 October 1856, Jedediah M. Grant of the First Presidency preached a sermon which loosened the men's commitment to the marriage relationship, compared the value of women to men, and reaffirmed the men's authority. Grant's rhetoric is also an interesting combination of Biblical imagery and frontier argot as he speaks first to the men:

> If you was full of the holy ghost you would . . . be round about us, instead of being all the time with your wives. It is the greatest piece of nonsense that was ever planted in a Gentle breast, for a man to tie himself down to be at home day and night with his women. Where would this kingdom go, if brother Brigham and his Council were to do so? It would go to hell, across lots, in double quick time. Do not let your wives bind you up with green withes and strong cords as Delilah did Sampson and make you powerless.

> Break asunder the cords, the ropes and cables that bind you, and come forth ye old men, out of your shells, and break your lariats and your stakes, and begin to drink of the fountain of life, with God and His servants. (JD 4: 127)

In the foregoing, Counselor Grant creates a vision of marriage in which significant involvement ages and imprisons men while association with priesthood bearers rejuvenates and liberates.

Later in the same sermon, Grant concludes that women are troublesome: "at ease, and careless, and dull, and blind." And he advises the Sisters to "humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes, until they get the Holy Ghost" and learn that "a man is president to his family" (JD 4: 127). The fact that Grant raised the issue suggests that some women were claiming power. The next month, Counselor Grant asked if Brother Kimball was at fault for " . . . chastising an unruly wife? No. If she gets in his path and he steps on her heels, is he to blame? No, and if she is hurt thereby, it is the result of her own acts" (JD 4: 85).

Kimball, himself, once confessed that whenever he got "a new wife, I always dedicate her to God" (JD 6: 190). Mormon women did not dedicate their husbands, because the men were not the women's property. However, Kimball frequently addressed the question of male supremacy; and in 1856 he observed that none of his wives should partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper if they had offended him: "Why is this? Because I am their

governor, their dictator, their revelator, their prophet, and their priest. . ." (JD 4: 82). On the other hand, some of those women must have been indifferent to their "governor" and "priest" because he also complained: "I have one or two women that I cannot control and never did; and I would as soon try to control a rebellious mule as to control them" (JD 5: 277).

Such domestic rebellion perhaps had no effect on Heber Kimball, but other men apparently suffered at the hands of a domineering wife. Kimball noted that there were Sisters who "lounged" around the Tithing Office, dragging their gowns into "fragments and strings," ruling their husbands, and "making snaps and flirts, like a whip lash" (JD 4: 144). Earlier that year, Kimball also recounted a dream Joseph Fielding had had some years earlier; and Brother Fielding, apparently present in the congregation, assisted Kimball in his recitation:

> Brother Fielding dreamed that he had a sharp sickle, and that he hung it up on a bush, but when he returned and took down his sickle, he found the edge all taken off from it. This will apply to many others. You remember it, do you not, brother Joseph?--and is it correct? It is, and his sickle has not cut from that time to the present, and the reason is he has had a woman straddle of his neck from that day to this. (JD 4: 83)

While the foregoing almost pleads for a psychoanalytic interpretation, it may be sufficient to note that Heber Kimball was annoyed by the number of castrating wives in the Church--again an issue of power.

The following July, Kimball elaborated on his concern by noting:

> Women are made to be led, and counselled, and directed. If they are not led, and do not make their cables fast to the power and authority they are connected with, they will be damned. (JD 5: 29)

After thus threatening the women, Kimball defined specific behaviors for proper wives:

> There should not be a lady in the house of Israel but what should be like an angel to administer to her husband, and to pray for him, and to nourish him by night and by day, and watch his house and his pillow, and see that he is preserved in the last days. (JD 5: 136)

Because there seems to be no statement in pioneer Mormon discourse which directs the brethren to exhibit all the same kinds of care for their wives, man's greater value emerges.

The discourse moderates. After Daniel H. Wells was sustained as Young's Second Counselor, definitions of wives became more temperate. In March of 1857, Counselor Wells told his congregation that women had "power and faith and full purpose of heart, desiring to do right"; and he advised the men to "have a little magnanimity of mind" in leading them. Wells did not suggest that traditional roles had changed, however. He counseled the women to have "confidence" in their husbands, believe that they are " . . . capable of leading. . . ; and be faithful, humble, and obedient to them. Their feelings should not be concentrated in you, but your feelings should be in them" (JD 4: 255-256). That same day, Apostle

Orson Hyde reinforced woman's subordinate status when he claimed:

> The order of heaven places man in the front rank; hence he is first to be addressed. Woman follows under the protection of his counsels, and the superior strength of his arm. Her desire should be unto her husband and he should rule over her. (JD 4: 258)

After the "Reformation" of 1856 and 1857, Church leaders more often advised the brethren to govern through leadership rather than coercive power. In April Conference of 1858, President Young confessed, "I seldom give a child a cross word; I seldom give a wife a cross word" (JD 8: 74). And the following year Apostle Amasa Lyman chastised the "poor miserable" men who whipped their wives into submission (JD 7: 305). Nothing in Mormon doctrine sanctions authority by physical abuse, and there is no evidence that Mormon men typically disciplined their wives in that manner. Nevertheless, the practice has long existed, both without and within the Church.

During the next decade, President Young advanced several inconsistent definitions. In April Conference of 1861, he admitted that "many women are smarter than their husbands"; and the next year he observed " . . . if a woman can rule a man and he not know it, praise to that woman" (JD 9: 39; 308). Young also said:

> I have seen women who, I thought, actually knew more about the business of life than their husbands themselves did, and were really more capable of directing a farm, the building of a house, and the management of flocks and herds, etc., than the men were. (JD 11: 135)

However, Young immediately claimed that if men lived up to their "privileges" such would not be the case because men had a "right" to claim "the light of truth" (JD 11: 135). In addition, Young also warned his own wives not to "cry" around him. And he said:

> Let our wives be the weaker vessels, and let the men be men, and show the women by their superior ability that God gives husbands wisdom and ability to lead their wives into his presence. (JD 9: 308)

In that same sermon, Young also observed:

> I do not believe in making my authority . . . known by brute force; but by superior intelligence. . . . If I have a wife that wants to be humoured with five dollars, yes, take it; I would humour her. (JD 9: 307)

Young later said, "I control my wives by telling them the truth and letting them do as they like" (JD 14: 162). Apparently, the President believed that righteous Mormon men <u>were</u> naturally superior to their wives.

Brigham Young was generous in the rewards he promised the Sisters, however. In 1873, he observed:

> The women are entitled to the kingdom, they are entitled to the glory, they are entitled to exaltation if they are obedient to the Priesthood, and they will be crowned with those that are crowned. (JD 16: 167)

Thus Mormon women anticipated greater exaltation than most other Christian women; and such expectations probably dignified the Sisters' somewhat difficult experience in the early Church.

However, while the foregoing are examples of Young's liberal posture, it is important to remember that he typically advised men not to focus their greatest

energies within their marriages and to exercise righteous authority over their wives as men ordained of God. In addition, Young advised the Sisters to accept these role structures and find happiness within them: "A woman of faith and knowledge" says,

> "I will make the best of it; it is a law that man shall rule over me; his word is my law, and I must obey him; he must rule over me; this is upon me and I will submit to it," and by so doing she has promises that others do not have. (JD 16: 167)

Innovation and shifting emphases. After Mormon polygamy drew increasing attention to the Church, authoritative discourse incorporated fewer criticisms of the Sisters and made fewer claims of male supremacy. Instead, Church leaders began to attack rather than accept divorce, to promote caring relationships, and to extol the superiority of Mormon marriages. In 1878, John Taylor claimed that, "Men should feel right towards their wives and treat them in kindness and with regard, not allowing our love to wear out" (JD 19: 339). And five years later President Taylor added that men should treat their wives "as they would treat angels of God" (JD 24: 231).

In addition, Wilford Woodruff, Taylor's successor as President to the Church, claimed that no community could "prosper and maintain a high standard of morality" with a "large percentage of unmarried young men and young women" (MFP 3: 143). This value of marriage at an early age was generally popular in the nineteenth century, but has remained part of the Mormon culture to the present

time. Brigham Young admonished every man over the age of eighteen to "build a log cabin, if only ten feet square," and then get "'a bird to put in your little cage'" (IE July 1952, p. 540). In keeping with that spirit, many mission presidents following World War II advised home-bound elders, aged twenty-one, to marry within six months.

John Taylor also advised women to look for their "soul mate" on earth--a man they knew prior to birth: "In the pre-existence you chose a kindred spirit to be your head, stay, husband and protector on earth and to exalt you in the eternal worlds" (qtd. YWJ 26: 347). In addition to reinforcing woman's dependent condition, this statement perhaps added a dimension of "inevitability" to some women's relationships. However, while such marital "foredestination" has surfaced from time to time in the Church, it is not now considered doctrinal.

The "Ideal" Wife

With such exceptions as "devout," "chaste" and "obedient," few wifely characteristics are considered mandatory or doctrinal. However, authoritative discourse provides lists of "ideal" traits. Brigham Young wanted industry, homemaking skills, and thrift. And in 1889, Young's daughter Susa Gates polled popular Church leaders for their descriptions of "The Perfect Woman." Editor Gates printed the responses in the first volume of the Young Woman's Journal; and requests ranged from "good

looks"; "meek" dispositions; "intelligence without masculinity"; "education" without being "scientific" and "refinement without being intellectual"; to "domestic skills in my own wife but literary skills in others" (pp. 452-453).

"Perfect Women" were also described in the men's publications. In 1902 the Improvement Era, then the young men's official journal, printed "Advice on Marrying" which is here reproduced in part:

> There's no real objection to marrying a woman with a fortune, but there is to marrying a fortune with a woman. Money makes the mare go, and it makes her cut up, too, unless she's used to it and you drive her with a snaffle bit.
>
> While you are at it, there's nothing like picking out a good-looking wife, because even the handsomest woman looks homely sometimes, and so you can get a little variety; but a homely one can only look worse than usual. Beauty is only skin deep, but that's deep enough to satisfy any reasonable man. (Jan., p. 200)

Throughout most of its history, the Improvement Era included reprints from other publications including jokes and other filler materials. However, the foregoing was not identified in any manner as writing that should be discounted; and only the author line--"John Graham, the Packer"--suggested that the essay might not be Mormon discourse. Whatever its origin or intent, however, "Advice" is a snide affirmation of woman's inferior image.

In addition, for whatever reason woman was found deficient, some discourse advised recompense. In 1903, Elder T. C. Hoyt observed that, "'Twas woman led man from Eden, to atone for which she has been given the power to

make each man an Eden of his own . . . by making earth heavenly" (YWJ 14: 459). And in 1913, the Deseret News observed that because woman understood " . . . her husband's way in life is rougher than hers, his trials greater, his burdens heavier, it is her duty--and her privilege--to help him all she can with her tenderness and her love" (JHC 10 June 1913, p. 3).

Belief in a domestic haven was popular at the turn of the century. "Perfection" in the home corresponded with the ideals of American "Progressivism" and new theories of "scientific management." After World War II, the Church again intensified the "perfect" and "scientific" aspects of the married woman's role. On the other hand, wives have always been advised to please their husbands by attempting to be pretty and tidy.

Wives should be attractive. In 1921, Elder Heber Q. Hale wrote:

> Men just cannot tolerate . . . uncleanliness of person or untidiness in dress, or slovenliness in housekeeping or in cooking. . . . There is no excuse for a woman's failing in any of these four things. (YWJ 32: 141)

The Journal also told girls that a well-organized wife could "always find time to clean up and put on a smile," and that a woman should always take time to "arrange the hair as 'he' likes it best" (32: 718).

In 1927, Adam S. Bennion taught Gleaner Girls the "Graces that Make for Happy Married Life"; and he listed beauty first:

> A woman has not only the right but the obligation to be as beautiful as possible. . . . I would rather look at a face that is subdued under that artificial treatment than to look at a face that glistens in the absence of that treatment. . . . A woman ought to look beautiful. (YWJ 38: 484-485)

Bennion also observed that women had no excuse for "unkempt hair"; and he said " . . . the road to a man's heart is through the stomach, and the key to the house centers in the kitchen." Because generations of similar discourse have rendered this value "normal," it might be worth listing just one alternative: "The road to a man's heart is through his intellect, and the key to the house centers in the library."

In 1935, the Improvement Era considered ingratiation strategies throughout the year. In February, Katie C. Jensen told readers that men liked good listeners; women who kept their troubles inside and a sunny outside; women who knew how to wear clothes and made a man "proud of her"; women who used "exquisite perfume" and who smiled their way into people's hearts. In contrast men did not like women with loud voices or those who insisted on their own way (Feb., p. 128). In July, the Era warned married women not to let down in their grooming: "Do you know how much that stray lock sticking straight out at the back of your neck disturbs him? Do you know you are his banner?" (435). (Men are not told this.) And in November readers learned that girls ought to stand tall unless they are near shorter men. Then "the tall girl may shorten herself two inches if she knows how to relax at

the knee" (686). In contrast to the foregoing, men are not expected to appease female egos, only to support women financially.

Along those same lines, in 1969 Lorraine Roberts observed in "A Woman's Career" that a wife should close her eyes to her husband's and family's irritating habits; but she should make sure that she puts on "a freshly laundered house dress" and applies lipstick to "smiling lips before her husband arrives home from work" (IE May, p. 40). This value of physical attractiveness has been so central in Mormon culture--as in American and other Western cultures--, that almost every year the Relief Society Magazine printed an article or two advising women to "design" themselves always to meet their husbands' wishes.

In addition, the Improvement Era advised women who wanted "happier marriages" not to "wear curlers when he's in sight" and to "put on your cold cream in the daytime." That same article also advised wives to "be home" when the husband returns, not to be on the telephone when he returns and not to start talking on the phone "until after he leaves in the morning" (Jan. 1970, p. 7). Ten years later, the Ensign printed an account of how a woman tried to improve her marriage: "I lost some weight, dressed more neatly, and let my hair grow a little longer because Brent likes it better that way" (Jan. 1981, pp. 8-9). These physical changes, combined with asking his permission more

often, resulted in improved relationships. According to the article, however, Brent made no personal concessions.

In contrast, the 1970 series on "happier marriages," offered the men advice. Suggestions ranged from "bring her flowers while she can still smell them," and "ask your wife's advice on business problems and sometimes take it" to "kiss the back of your wife's neck once a day"; "cry a little--she'll love mothering you"; and "when she is telling a story, don't give away the punch line" (IE Jan. pp. 5-6). Men were not told to straighten their ties, recomb their hair or shave before going home. Until the last few years, little discourse has discussed man's physical appearance as it affects their wives, and the inference is that men do not need to be handsome for their wives' sakes. On the other hand, the Era's advice denied the woman's intelligence and again indexed the larger issue of institutionally prescribed male supremacy.

Wives should be submissive. Although no one now speaks in harsh tones, Mormon male supremacy still shades the image of the wife. In 1920, the Relief Society Magazine printed a short story in which a gadding, flirting, immodest wife disgraced her husband. Two male "high council members" criticized the man: "If he has no more control in his family . . . , how can anyone expect him to control a ward or a stake?" (7: 458). And two decades later, Apostle John A. Widtsoe said, "The father

is the president, provider, and by official virtue of his priesthood, the official spokesman of the family" (IE Oct. 1940, p. 586).

In 1956, Elder John Farr Larson advised the woman to take pride in the way her husband "presided" at the table and in other "important ordinances" (RSMag 43: 779). That same year, a career woman told the Improvement Era that her working showed the world that "my husband was a low-salaried man--that I was not satisfied with his income." Her narrative also revealed a contented family: successful, responsible children and a husband who enjoyed sports and visiting with the neighbors. Nevertheless, the author concluded that a decision to stay home would let George become "the man of the family, and with that privilege allow him to gain his self-respect once more." And so she quit work (Mar., pp. 148-149).

In addition, although women are told to defer to their husbands, the Church denies discrimination. Men and women are said to be equal, but men hold final authority. The situation is well stated in a 1960 Improvement Era: "As a boy is growing up, he visualizes his mother and father as a team, with the father carrying the leadership role of being 'the first among two equals'" (Feb. 1960, p. 93). As a matter of policy, the man controls.

In 1964, the Relief Society Magazine observed that the "responsibility of control . . . is . . . in the hands of the Priesthood"; and men should be responsible

for order and discipline in the home (51: 633). In April Conference the next year, Apostle Spencer W. Kimball concluded that " . . . no sane woman would hesitate to give submission to her own really righteous husband in everything." And he admitted that he was " . . . sometimes shocked to see the wife take over the leadership, naming the one to pray, the place to be, the things to do" (IE June 1965, p. 514).

In 1969, the Improvement Era observed:

> It is a cardinal teaching of the Church that the man is the head of the family. . . . There is to be no confusion as to the roles of husband and wife. Children are to identify with a strong, manly father. They identify with a lovely mother who sustains and supports but does not usurp the leadership of the father. (Dec., p. 108)

The next year, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie argued from a doctrinal position:

> In the patriarchal order of celestial marriage, the husband is the eternal and everlasting head of the wife; he is the Lord's agent and representative. . . . God set man to lead, to preside, to be the last word. Woman is obligated to conform, to obey, to be in subjection to the will of her husband, as long as his rulership is exercised in righteousness. (2: 518-519)

In 1970, the Family Home Evening Manual also considered the doctrinal and eternal dimensions of "Patriarchal Government": "God has revealed that the proper form of family government is the patriarchal form, which means that the father is the head of his own immediate family and descendents" (104). In 1971, the Manual reconsidered the same issue and observed that the father's leadership role is "eternal" and " . . . cannot

and should not be delegated to another." That paragraph concluded with the following from Church President Joseph F. Smith:

> This patriarchal order has its divine spirit and purpose. . . . It is not merely a question of who is perhaps the best qualified. Neither is it wholly a question of who is living the most worthy life. It is a question largely of law and order. . . . (45)

The foregoing is a popular explanation of patriarchy. It was later used in both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood lesson manuals, and surfaces occasionally in other discourse. The ostensible point is that patriarchy is <u>largely</u> a matter of law and order. However, "largely" implies that other variables influenced God's choice; and the two preceding sentences explain those variables.

"It is not merely a question of who is perhaps best qualified" suggests that leadership qualifications <u>are</u> a consideration; and men are "best leaders"; "perhaps" does not lessen the outcome. The next sentence raises the issue of "worthiness"; and the term "wholly" does not detract from men's superiority there, either. Thus, a foundational statement does not explicitly claim that men are better qualified or more worthy to lead, but it implies as much; and contemporary Church leaders employ the statement without qualification.

In 1973, the <u>Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide</u> repeated several popular concepts:

> The position which men occupy in the family, and especially those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, is one of first importance and should be clearly recognized and maintained in the order and with the

> authority which God conferred upon men--placing him at the head of the household.
>
> There is no higher authority in matters relating to the family organization, and especially when that organization is presided over by one holding the higher priesthood, than that of the father. . . . (164)

That recent manual also quoted Joseph F. Smith's earlier statement: "In the home the presiding authority is always invested in the father and in all home affairs and family matters there is no other authority paramount" (165). Finally, the lesson concluded that the patriarch can "make of a home what he will" (165).

Three years later, the same lesson manual reprinted an address in which Elder A. Theodore Tuttle had told a large congregation:

> Now, you men are the head of the house. Do you girls understand that? When you go through the temple, you'll understand that very clearly, for the Lord makes it rather definite . . . the Lord puts the man at the head of the family, with his wife right at his side to sustain and uphold. (MPPSG 1976-77, p. 59)

Along those same lines, the 1978-79 Family Home Evening Manual observed that, "There must be a presiding authority in the family. The father is the head or president or spokesman of the family" (61). However, that Manual extended the mother's role to "presiding" in her husband's absence; and some power accrued to women.

In 1979, Elder James Paramore considered subordination in the book titled Woman. He quoted Daniel Wells' statement that wives should have faith in their husbands' leadership, men should not concentrate their

affections in their wives, but women should focus on their husbands. Paramore quoted a 1958 Improvement Era claim that the man is "supreme in his family," and "no one can remove or release him from office." Then Paramore concluded paradoxically that the wife is the "center" of the "sacred, eternal, and patriarchal institution" of marriage (52-56).

In the foregoing, Elder Paramour deviated slightly from a now popular conception that the man "presides" in "love" and "consideration." In 1971, members of the Priests Quorums read a new definition: "Leadership may be a partnership," and husbands might consider their wives' interests and counsel on matters of mutual concern. After that process, however, " . . . the decision is with the father, for to him goes the recognition for success or the criticism for error" (Series B, p. 140; emphasis added). The foregoing mention of priesthood responsibility is a significant articulation of Mormon doctrine: In 1857, Erastus Snow stated, "I assume the responsibility of the acts of my wives and children so far as the are obedient to me; . . . God has laid it upon me" (JD 5:289). However, the union of "responsibility" with "recognition" adds a critical dynamic that will be treated more thoroughly later.

In 1973, the Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide told men that, as patriarchs of the family, they should make their wives "queens" and "partners" and show

them "all the love and consideration possible at all times and in all things." In addition, men were told to respect a wife, never insult her, never speak slightingly of her, and certainly never be cruel. Husbands were also to counsel with their wives concerning family finances, and at least once a week do "one of her chores" (174-176). The foregoing might appear patronizing or lose positive impact when one considers that in situations where equality is accepted, no discourse addresses the issue.

After Spencer W. Kimball first became President of the Church, he typically said that a righteous husband ruled his wife in love and understanding. In 1976, however, Kimball confessed that he was concerned by the word "rule": "It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word preside because that's what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family." Kimball also defined the wife as man's first consideration: "She, the woman, occupies the first place . . . even above the parents . . . even the children must take their proper but significant place" (Ensign Mar., p. 72).

In 1979, President Kimball told men that, "Our dominion must be a righteous dominion, and our partnerships with our eternal companions, our wives, must be full partnerships" (Ensign Nov., 48-49). And a year later, N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency asserted that leadership in the home occurs as "father and mother

together take their places as patriarch and matriarch of the family" (Ensign May 1980, p. 18).

Thus discourse displays kaleidoscopic patterns. Women still need to "please" their spouses to a degree that men do not. Women still have less authority than their husbands. However, men are advised to counsel with their wives before making decisions and to help their wives with "women's work." In 1984, Sister Anne Reese of the Relief Society Presidency concluded that marriage was "an equal partnership but with a division of duties, where neither male nor female means superior" (ChNews 5 Feb., p. 4). In addition, woman's need for mortal marriage has been changed.

Modifications in the Need to Marry

For most of its history, the Church has claimed that mortal marriage was necessary for celestial glory. As recently as 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball explicitly defended the constant promotion of marriage and families even though such discourse might distress the single Sisters (Ensign Nov. 1978, p. 103). Twenty-five percent of all adult Mormon women are currently single, however; and perhaps in an effort to accommodate those women, the contemporary Church has revised its definitions.

In 1979, Kimball assured righteous women who had "not yet the great privilege of marriage" that on the scale of eternity, their missing blessings "shall be but a moment." Kimball also said that those women who were

"temporarily deprived" would one day "receive all--think of it, sisters--all that our Father has!" (Ensign Nov. 1979, pp. 102-103). Such promises seem inconsistent with Mormon scripture; and the 132rd Section of the Doctrine and Covenants argues the complete opposite. In addition, the Church has cited no recent revelations to supersede such doctrine. On the other hand, the conflicting beliefs are never compared; and doctrine is apparently being authoritatively redefined through a process in which old standards are not mentioned and new promises take their place. Thus Mormonism adapts to changing conditions and maintains a balance between inflexible absolutes and chaotic relativism.

The Family Home Evening Manual provides examples of other definitional changes. In 1976-77, that publication asserted that family home evening (a weekly family gathering for study and recreation) was "for everyone." It was for "groups of single adults and for those who live alone or with roommates" (3). Thus, single women are not included in orthodox definitions of "marriage." But they are now officially (if arbitrarily) a small "family"--at least for instructional purposes--, and acceptable as such.

In addition, contemporary Church leaders frequently honor the single woman. Elder Neal A. Maxwell asserted that "special admiration" was due the single women of the church who were "some of the noblest

daughters of God" (Ensign May 1978, pp. 10-11). Such discourse is seldom completely supportive, however. Many speakers observe that women who remain single had "no choice" or "poor choice" in that decision--suggesting that they are not attractive marriage partners. In addition, Church leaders still contend that single status is spiritually, socially and emotionally inferior to marriage.

Elder Maxwell noted that single women could enjoy a "wise" career, but not "the most choice career" (Ensign May 1978, p. 11). Elder Marion Hanks advised single women to wait "bravely" while preparing for marriage--the "highest fulfillment" of their dreams (IE May 1969, p. 52). In 1979 President Kimball advised male Church leaders to be "especially thoughtful" of the sisters who were, "through no fault of their own," not married. He continued, "Do not regard their presence in your midst as a burden but as a blessing" (Ensign Nov. 1979, p. 49). And Gordon B. Hinckley, current spokesman for the First Presidency, urged women not to feel "that because you are single God has forsaken you" (Ensign Nov. 1983, pp. 81-84). Thus while unmarried women are currently promised a full salvation, much contemporary discourse still suggests that the female's single status is pitiable and wrong.

Mormon Mothers

In contrast to the mottled image of single women, in 1956 Apostle Richard L. Evans described ideal mothers to CBS radio listeners as follows:

> And so we have the picture, the unforgettable picture and impression of mothers waiting--waiting at night, waiting at mealtime, waiting at the bedside of sickness; still waiting after the flight of manhood, of womanhood, has taken the children far from home--mothers looking for letters, looking for news, looking for those they love. . . . 'Is mother at home?' 'Where is mother?' There is only one voice that can answer this question with full satisfaction and assurance. And as the children enter and ask it, God grant that there may be more mothers at home where more mothers ought to be. (13 May 1956; transcript IE May 1956, p. 540)

Apostle Evans was more articulate than most, but many Church leaders subscribe to the same romantic image. Motherhood has always been near the top of the Church's proclaimed values, and this ranking parallels a general American allegiance.

In earlier decades of Church history, however, Mormons and some other groups defined "mothers" in more inclusive terms than is currently the case. During the settlement of the Salt Lake Valley, most adult females were called "mothers" whether they had borne children or not. As noted earlier, Brigham Young chastised "wives" under the rubric of "mother" in 1852; and Eliza Snow, a barren woman, referred to herself as a "Mother in Zion." Increasingly, however, Mormons reserve the term "mother" to designate a woman who has actually borne children. In addition, authoritative discourse claims that the natural

woman wants children and the healthy married woman is commanded by God to bear them. Church members also learn that motherhood is the most significant career females can enter and mothers' rewards are the highest. Finally, most authoritative discourse prescribes specific nurturing procedures and characterizes the role in exaggerated terms.

Motherhood is Instinctive

In 1929, Professor Paul Poponoe told readers of the Young Woman's Journal that "normal human beings" wanted children and the human "personality and character" were "incomplete--hopelessly and pathetically incomplete" without parenting experience (YWJ 40: 735). In 1936, Elder Nephi L. Morris asserted that the "divine" art of home-making was "innate" in women, and little girls played with dolls and doll houses because of their "true," "unerring and prophetic . . . instincts" (RSMag 23: 405). Later Sister Camilla Eyring Kimball, wife of Spencer W. Kimball, wrote, "Motherhood is a career of the first magnitude and is the instinctive ambition of every girl" (RSMag 35: 292).

Nearly thirty years later, President Kimball, himself, said that Eve, "like other normal women, wanted children" (Ensign Mar. 1976, p. 71). And Lavina Anderson noted in 1982 that manuals for Mormon pre-teenagers repeated the deterministic belief that "Heavenly Father" made men and women as they are: "That is why little girls

have always liked to play with dolls or something they can mother. That is why boys play at more active masculine kinds of games" (EII, p. 3).

Motherhood is Mandatory

The foregoing is typical but overshadowed by a more intense focus on woman's obligation to bear offspring. Such concern seems unwarranted, given the belief that women desire maternity. Nevertheless, God commanded his children in Genesis to multiply and replenish the earth; and subsequent Mormon discourse builds on that injunction. In 1895 the Young Woman's Journal claimed, ". . . it is not alone the position of wifehood we are called upon to magnify, but the sacred duties of motherhood are required of us" (7: 26). In 1924, the same publication observed that it was not until a woman became a mother that she filled "the measure of her creation" (35: 125). And a year later the Journal contended that, "Woman's greatest achievement is motherhood" (36: 710).

Fewer American women married after World War I, and those who did had smaller families. At the same time, the Church and some other interests intensified their promotion of motherhood. Local wards and newspapers honored the "oldest," the "youngest," the "most recent" and the "most prolific" mothers within their boundaries; and Church publications depicted large families and memorialized motherhood in writing of all kinds. For

example, in 1921 Ruth May Fox published a widely-read poem in which a woman who is ambitious for secular success learns that "the love of holy motherhood" was her "transcendent gift," "glory" and "exaltation" (YWJ 32: 335-336).

In 1928, Apostle J. Reuben Clark, Jr., told a Tabernacle audience that the famous women of history, "the Elizabeths, the Catherines, the Sapphos" were "in the field of competition with men." Clark also defined the better choice: "Motherhood to woman is a duty, a mission. It is a destiny." And he suggested that motherhood be placed on a "pinnacle . . . on mountain peaks." Clark also concluded that motherhood is the "best thing" women can do (DN 19 May 1928, p. iv). In addition, in 1934 the "Church Department" of the Deseret News claimed that any woman who sacrificed motherhood to prove that she could do man's work was "something less than a true woman, and . . . to be pitied as well as condemned" (17 Feb., p. 3).

In 1948, the Improvement Era honored Emily Higgs Bennett, a new board member of the young ladies' auxiliary, who abandoned a potential career to marry and raise eight children (July, p. 477). A few years later, the Deseret News claimed that "Anti-Christian Communism" was attempting to turn mothers' responsibility over to the state, a popular argument of the McCarthy period (8 Oct. 1951, B-2). And a decade later the Relief Society Magazine also reflected a conservative national posture when it

quoted California educator Dr. Max Rafferty. After weeks of state hearings concerning women's issues, Rafferty concluded that "residents would gladly barter half a dozen status officials for one mother"--another reinforcement of basic Mormon values (54: 13).

In 1969, Church President David O. McKay claimed that "parenthood, and particularly motherhood, should be held as a sacred obligation" (IE June 1969, p. 4; emphasis added). This statement is interesting because it suggests that parenthood might be more essential to Mormon women than to Mormon men. In 1979, Church President Spencer W. Kimball wrote that woman's role was "fixed" before the world began: to "cooperate" with her husband, "bear the children, and rear and teach them" (Woman, pp. 79-80). That same year, Kimball also promised "without equivocation" that " . . . a woman will find no greater satisfaction and joy and peace and make no greater contribution to mankind than in being a wise and worthy woman and raising good children" (Ensign Mar. 1979, p. 4).

Apostle Ezra Taft Benson explained in the book titled Woman that women were "elect" spirits because they were "elected" by God to be "wives and mothers in Zion!" (70). And prestigious Mormon women accept and promote their role. In 1984, Marie Osmond (Craig) told reporters that "all the hoopla" of public acclaim "didn't matter much." She really had "just two major goals in life: to become a wife and mother" (This People, Feb. 1984, p. 52).

The foregoing represents one of the most enduring and prominent values in Mormon discourse: God commanded all women to be mothers, and all women desire the same.

Motherhood is Rewarding

Church leaders usually enhance the foregoing by stressing the impact and rewards of the office. Magazine readers learned that mothers work with "living clay" to mold a "flawless temple for immortal souls" (43: 577). In 1930, the same publication claimed that wifehood and motherhood offered women "their highest opportunity for service, their greatest avenues for development, their greatest sources of joy" (17: 622). In 1978, Church President Spencer W. Kimball asked what more women could want than the " . . . liberty to fully express themselves as mothers, as nurses to the sick, as proponents of high community ideals, and as protectors of good morals" (Ensign May 1978, p. 6). And in 1983, Relief Society women read John A. Widtsoe's interesting claim: "Motherhood is an eternal part of the Priesthood" (Relief Society Course of Study, p. 28).

Most Church leaders agree that motherhood is, or should be, completely fulfilling and attended by surpassing blessings. As a result, such terms as "sacred," "divine," "heavenly, and "reigning" often glorify the mortal role. In 1903, Sister Martha Horne Tingey, later General President of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, described a mother's "domain" where she was

"queen of the home." There "her authority is unquestioned, her influence unbounded." And, "every member . . . must be a loyal, obedient subject of that little kingdom" (YWJ 14: 398-400). And in 1976, Apostle Mark E. Petersen claimed, "The gospel elevates womankind like nothing else can. It puts our sisters on a pedestal. They become queens in their homes" (Ensign Mar. 1976, p. 74).

For the last several years, the Church has also employed the slogan "Motherhood, a partnership with God." This statement has appeared as the title of articles, lessons, and teaching aides. It is articulated several times a year in conferences and local meetings. In 1978 President Spencer W. Kimball told a large Women's Conference that, "Motherhood is a holy calling, a sacred dedication. . . . Mothers have a sacred role. They are partners with God" (Beloved Sisters, p. 32). And in 1979, N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency, asserted that a mother is "a co-partner with God. . . . No greater honor could be given" (Woman, p. 6).

Thus authoritative Mormon discourse dignifies the mother's role as sacred, satisfying, of enormous consequence, and attended by unquestioned blessings hereafter. The Relief Society Magazine promised the latter when it stated, " . . . if mothers will do their part, even though it costs their lives, . . . the eternal reward in our Father's celestial world will be certain" (54: 10). On the other hand, any thorough consideration of mothers'

role must include not only significance and rewards, but procedures as well; and the following indicate some sanctioned approaches.

Large Families Have Been the Norm

Changes in birthrate among Mormon families have parallelled the national pattern, rising and falling at the same time as the rest of the country. Latter-day Saint families, however, have ranged from sixty percent larger to nearly double the national average; and this phenomenon reflects specifically Mormon values. Currently a few members claim that the Church does not promote large families nor condemn any birth control measures outside of abortion. Such claims would be difficult to support. Instead, the following examples from authoritative discourse display orthodox values over more than a hundred years.

In 1856, President Brigham Young spoke to both the question of family planning and the Mormon belief in a "pre-existence" when he said, "It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can . . . that the noble spirits which are waiting for tabernacles can be brought forth" (JD 4: 56). A year later, Counselor Heber C. Kimball warned the Church that it was wrong for a woman "to live with" her husband just to gratify his "lusts" (JD 5: 91). And in 1882, Apostle Erastus Snow complained about "modern doctors and doctresses" who enabled husband and wife to enjoy "the

pleasures of self-gratification without bearing the responsibilities of maternity" (JD 23: 230-231).

The early twentieth century. Both the Mormon and the national birthrate dropped around the turn of the century. In 1900, Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff warned those who employed birth control measures that they would lose "the stars in their crown" and perhaps "shut out a means of exaltation." Woodruff also said that such persons might not be able to repair that "grievous wrong . . . for many ages, if at all" (CR Apr. 1900, p. 39). During this same period, President Theodore Roosevelt warned the country against "race suicide" (qtd. in April Conference of 1903 by Reed Smoot; p. 54). A 1903 Deseret News editorial claimed that birth control was "a crime against the race" and anti-Christian (18 Apr. 1903, pp. 1-2). And the Young Woman's Journal complained that child-prevention:

> . . . which is next to child-murder, has such a deadening effect upon the soul as well as the body, that the woman who engages in it, as well as the man who consents to it, becomes as it were, hermetically sealed to spiritual things. (19: 65)

In 1911, Ruth May Fox responded to a contemporary argument as follows:

> "Fewer children and better ones" is one of the most ridiculous fallacies of the age. . . . Heaven grant that the Latter-day Saints may fully realize their duty in this respect. (YWJ 22: 214-215)

In addition, in 1913 Apostle Heber J. Grant warned: "Failure to bear children due to practising birth control is deemed wickedness with retribution likely to be visited

upon the couple or nation which advocates such a policy" (Hastings, et. al. 599).

The most powerful proscriptions in the early twentieth century, however, comes from Church President Joseph F. Smith who told Relief Society women that birth control was a crime:

> I regret, I think it is a crying evil, that there should exist a sentiment or feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. I think that is a crime wherever it occurs, where husband and wife are in possession of health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity. I believe that where people undertake to curtail or prevent the birth of their children that they are going to reap disappointment by and by. I have no hesitancy in saying that I believe this is one of the greatest crimes of the world today, this evil practice.

Smith also claimed that his wives had borne him from "seven to eleven or twelve children" apiece, "and they are not sorry for it either" (RSMag 4: 318-322).

In response to President Smith, a committee of women drafted a resolution which Susa Young Gates read to a concluding session of Relief Society Conference. The statement was titled, "Resolutions Concerning Birth Control or Race Suicide"; and it was subsequently printed in the Relief Society Magazine in part as follows: "Whereas . . . use of contraceptive devices to prevent childbearing" makes of marriage "a mockery in the sight of God . . . :

> be it Resolved That . . . we sever all connections with any club, society, or associates who advocate and practice birth-control or race suicide. That we refuse to sustain papers, magazines, publishers and writers who teach this doctrine. . . . And be it

> resolved, in conclusion, that we invite the co-operation and support of the Priesthood quorums and auxiliary organizations of the Church in this effort to maintain our high and holy ideals and principles. (RSMag 4: 322-323)

Smith's address and the women's response reaffirmed the standards and provided the language for much subsequent discourse on the subject.

In 1920, Elder Heber C. Iverson warned his General Conference congregation:

> There are women who profess to be Christians who are forever going about poisoning the minds and hearts of every young bride they can reach with the venom of their hell-flamed tongues, advising them to forestall the laws of nature and nature's God by preventing the conception, and birth and rearing of children.

However, while Iverson indicted only women as immoral publicists, he concluded with a nearly unique recognition of man's role in family planning: "Oh, Herod, Herod! what a tyro you were. The modern husband and wife have put you to shame in the damning sin of the 'slaughter of the innocents'" (CR Oct. 1920, p. 101).

In 1922, the Improvement Era advised:

> Get married. Beget children--don't be scared; let them come, as many as God is willing to send you. . . . Do not try to interfere with the course of nature as regards bearing children. (Dec., p. 143)

In 1926, Apostle John A. Widtsoe contended that limiting family size was "contrary to the spirit of the Great Plan" (qtd. Hastings, et al. 600). In 1930, the Improvement Era warned, "Delays are dangerous . . . the wife gets in a condition where she cannot have children. . . . The Lord will help her provide for those children" (Aug. 1930, p.

679). And a year earlier, Apostle Melvin A. Ballard told his Conference congregation that, "poverty" should not prevent Church members from maintaining the "high standards" of large families (CR Apr. 1929, p. 69). Thus the Church responded to the concerns of the Great Depression.

In May of 1941, as war approached, Elder Lynn S. Richards noted that some women regrettably announced their intention to have "only four" children. Richards warned his listeners against "glib tongues" that "recommend and suggest the violation of God's great command"; and he linked patriotism to family size when he said, "Bigger and better Christian homes are the answer to our hope for the world and democracy" (ChNews 17 May 1941, p. 8). Subsequent discourse also has occasionally tapped "national security" as a warrant for large families.

Following the War, the nation entered the "baby boom" era with Mormons leading the way. Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, later President of the Church, warned:

> . . . when a man and woman . . . agree . . . to limit their offspring to two or three, and practice devices to accomplish this purpose, they are guilty of iniquity which eventually must be punished.

Smith, the father of eleven, also said, "It should be understood definitely that this kind of doctrine is not only not advocated by the authorities of the Church, but is condemned by them as a wickedness in the sight of the Lord" (ChNews 12 July 1947). When quoted in the "Church News," that last statement was set in bold-face type.

Those Sisters who read biographical sketches carefully would note that many prominent Church members had small families by Mormon standards. However, the members of the First Presidency and the Presidents of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles from World War II to the present have averaged better than six children apiece. In addition, "honored" mothers usually met the Church's ideal. In 1948, Utah's "Mother of the Year" was Mima M. Broadbent with fourteen children (RSMag 35: 393). And in 1952, Cora Lindsay Bennion, with ten children, claimed the state title (RSMag 39: 385).

That same year, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson asserted that the great civilizations of the past decayed in part because, "the operation of contraception and abortion was common" (IE May 1952, p. 432). And Caroline Eyring Miner complained to Relief Society Magazine readers that too many Latter-day Saints were "planning for a family of two--one boy and one girl, or maybe two of each" (39: 454). According to Miner, a family needed to "have quantity to have quality."

In 1965, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith again warned couples practicing birth control that they would "have to answer for their sin when the proper time comes and actually may be denied the glorious celestial kingdom" (IE Dec. 1965, pp. 1107-1109). And in 1969, Apostle Benson warned the Church:

> The Lord did not say to multiply and replenish the earth if it is convenient, or if you are wealthy, or

> after you have gotten your schooling, or when there is peace on earth, or until you have four children. (IE June 1969, p. 44)

That same year, President David O. McKay and his counselors wrote a "Circular Letter" addressing "the attitude of the Church . . . regarding birth control." That most authoritative statement reads, in part, as follows:

> We seriously regret that there should exist a sentiment or feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. . . . Where husband and wife enjoy health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity, it is contrary to the teachings of the Church artificially to curtail or prevent the birth of children. . . . However, . . . the mother's health and strength should be conserved and the husband's consideration for his wife is his first duty, and self-control a dominant factor in all their relationships. (CirLetter 14 April 1969)

The letter concludes that married couples should "seek inspiration and wisdom from the Lord that they may exercise discretion in solving their marital problems."

The foregoing draws substantially on Joseph F. Smith's 1917 statement. Both proscribe all "artificial curtailment" or "prevention" of children. In addition, however, the "Letter" introduces ambiguous elements into the issue. "Artificial" curtailment and "self-control" are not explained; but "woman's health" and "self-control" appear as acceptable values. On the other hand, additional statements by the President suggest that "self-control" can be equated with "self-denial." In 1973, the Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide reprinted an earlier essay in which McKay claimed that manhood in

marriage was " . . . not undermined by the practice of continence. . . . Chastity is the crown of beautiful womanhood, and self-control is the source of true manhood. . ." (173). In addition, much subsequent discourse denounced most birth control practice.

In 1974, N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency complained against current talk of "emancipation, independence, sexual liberation, birth control, abortion, and other insidious propaganda" which "belittled" the role of mother and was "Satan's way of destroying woman, the home and the family" (Ensign Jan. 1974, p. 7). In that speech, Tanner clearly separated "birth control" from "abortion," but kept it in a large category of destructive practices. In contrast, prolific mothers were dignified as preservers of the Church's ideal.

Four years later, President Spencer W. Kimball listed evils that threatened Church members; and he warned specifically against the "loud, blatant voices" that "shout 'fewer children,' and offer the pill, surgery, and even ugly abortion" (Beloved Sisters, p. 31). In 1979, Kimball told the Sisters:

> Let other women pursue heedlessly what they selfishly perceive as their interests. . . . Let others selfishly pursue false values: God has given you the tremendous tasks of nurturing families, friends, and neighbors, just as men are to provide. (Beloved Sisters, p. 44)

In 1981, Elder Hartman Rector warned that evil practices, including birth control, abortion, sterilization and homosexuality, would render the whole

world wasted at Christ's coming (Ensign May 1981, pp. 73-75). And six months later, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson told the women that "beguiling voices" in the world cry out for "alternative life-styles" for women. Such voices also say it is "wise to limit your family so you can have more time for personal goals and self-fulfillment." In contrast, Benson claimed that, "The majority of women in the Church who can should be fulfilling their roles as wives and mothers." And he asked the Sisters to " . . . guard against the limiting of the size of your family when health of the mother or infant is not the concern" (Ensign Nov. 1981, pp. 104-107).

The orthodoxy changes. After a long history in which Church leaders denounced birth control, in 1975 President Kimball announced:

> We know of no directive from the Lord that proper sexual experience between husbands and wives need be limited totally to the procreation of children, but we find much evidence from Adam until now that no provision was ever made by the Lord for indiscriminate sex. (Ensign Oct. 1975, p. 4; rprnt. Ensign Sept. 1981, p. 46)

And in 1979, President Kimball concluded that, "The sexual drives which bind men and women together as one are good and necessary. . . . But here, more than almost any other place, we must exercise self-control" (NE Jan./Feb. 1979, p. 43).

That same year, Dr. Homer Ellsworth, a Salt Lake gynecologist, published forceful support for family planning in the Ensign, the Church's official magazine for

adult readers (Aug. 1979, pp. 23-24). Ellsworth claimed that Church members might limit family size after they reached the number of children that they could personally manage. (However, Ellsworth explained that state with the following inhibiting example: He recounted an incident in which a daughter of the President of the Church had a miscarriage after eight children, and asked her President/father if she might "quit now?" The father responded that the decision was between the couple and God; but he also said, "If you two can face him with a good conscience and can say you have done the best you could, that you have really tried, then you may quit.")

Ellsworth also advised Ensign readers to consider the mother's physical and mental health, the "parents' capacity to provide basic necessities, and so on" (emphasis added). And he contended that " . . . the method of spacing children . . . makes little difference. Abstinence . . . has side effects, some of which are harmful to the marriage relationship" (emphasis added). Ellsworth's article can as easily be read as an argument for spacing children as a license to significantly curtail family size. However, it is the most authoritative support for family planning in the Church to date, and the most frequently cited sanction for birth control.

On the other hand, all Church leaders agree that a woman should not limit her family to pursue a career or other nonmaternal interests. The "pill," is apparently

proscribed along with sterilization and most abortion. Some leaders denounce unnamed "artificial devices." And a 1982 "Letter" defines "oral sex" along with other "unnatural" practices as "unholy" and "impure" (First Presidency Letter 5 Jan. 1982, p. 2). Thus, Mormon mothers have an uncertain field of methods to use in limiting their families; and Mormon families remain relatively large.

In addition, the most recent General Handbook of Instructions advises that abortion is appropriate only when a competent doctor believes that the woman's life or health are at risk, or when "the pregnancy resulted from incest or rape" (Handbook 1983, pp. 77-78). Granted these exceptions are liberal when compared with the Roman Catholic Church. However, given that exceptions are allowed, the woman is still told by that most authoritative text to consider abortion only after counseling with her husband, her local Church leader, and receiving confirmation through prayer. Thus the Mormon woman is advised not to make even the most personal of decisions by herself.

Mothers' Work Is Unending

In addition to their continuing interest in birth control, Church leaders have defined other dimensions of orthodox motherhood. Such considerations run a range of possibilities from feeding practices to attitude. In 1967, N. Eldon Tanner said:

> A mother must realize, too, that every word she speaks, every act, every response, and every move, even her appearance in dress, affect the life of a child, and often the whole family. She must be strong and joyful, sweet and kind, loving and considerate, and more if you could think of it. (RSMag 54: 894)

Similar examples are limitless. However, all specific considerations can be classified under the "time-intensive" and "labor-intensive" aspects of the role. A good mother is always present and carefully nurturing her children.

In 1896, the Young Woman's Journal described the folly of Mrs. Gray who went to a meeting and left her baby with "Alice." Unfortunately, the "dear little baby" cried his "eyes out with the colic." And readers see him about to roll out of a rocking chair, and holding "a bottle of old, sour milk in his little cold 'paddies'" (7: 460-461). The Journal titled Mrs. Gray's community interest a "Virtue Perverted."

In 1936, Elder Nephi L. Morris told Relief Society Magazine readers that the woman was "the soul of the sacred institution" called "home," and when the mother was not there "the home-spirit" was "also gone" (23: 405). And in 1942, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency said:

> This divine service of motherhood can be rendered only by mothers. It may not be passed to others. Nurses cannot do it; public nurseries cannot do it; hired help cannot do it--only mother, aided as much as may be by the loving hands of father, brothers and sisters, can give the full needed measure of watchful care. (MFP 6: 177)

In 1969, Apostle Richard L. Evans quoted favorite questions from a half-dozen earlier broadcasts: "Is mother home?" "Where is mother?" And he admonished women: "Take time for your children. . . . Oh, let them have the blessing of your being there. . . . Mothers need to be home" (IE Dec., p. 77). In a similar vein, in 1972 Church President Spencer W. Kimball told of a household in which children from elementary age through high school arrived home separately and called for "Mother." Each was gratified to find: "Home! Mother! Security! Just to know Mother was home. All was well" (qtd. Haight; Woman, p. 18).

In 1979 Kimball spoke to that same concern and said, "Of late years, mothers have left their homes to work in such numbers that Church authorities are much concerned, and make a call to mothers: 'Come back home, Mothers, come back home'" (qtd. O. McConkie pp. 127-128). Some Church leaders even believe that mothering is required by grown children. A 1953 "Church News" editorial warned: "Even though a child leaves home, even though an unmarried son or daughter may reach the majority in age, nevertheless the responsibilities of the parents cannot be side-stepped" (6 June, p. 20).

For two decades following the Second World War, the Church shared most popular American ideals concerning mothers; the concept of "scientific home management" was widely revived and facilitated by postwar technology; and

print and electronic journalism depicted mothers perfecting every dimension of their families' lives.

One widely promoted project for Mormon mothers was the home nursery school for her own children. In 1970, Sister Lillian Bradshaw explained her success with a daily program that included an opening prayer; coloring; dot to dot or cutting out paper dolls; and "ten minutes to play with the clay, storytime, snack time, recess out on the play equipment," and a "small bell to signal a change of activity." Bradshaw reportedly attended to her baby while her children colored; and she bathed and fed the infant during recess. The hour after 11:30 lunch was rest for all so she would not be overly tired when her husband returned (RSMag 57: 724-730). Such thorough structuring and time management is typical of domestic scientism.

Authoritative discourse provides lengthy lists of additional responsibilities. However, rather than sample from several sources and years, three citations will reflect the nature of a large body of discourse and at the same time display the flavor of modern writing on the subject. In 1960, W. Cleon Skousen addressed the question of the "Ideal Mother" in the Improvement Era; and he concluded, in part:

> The ideal mother is very much of the earth--earthy, a being who is struggling toward heaven and drawing her children with her. The ideal mother is a housekeeper, washwoman, cook, seamstress, bookkeeper, purchasing agent, home decorator, teacher, preacher, policeman, child psychologist, disciplinarian, nurse, gardner, hostess, conversationalist, storyteller, good listener, PTA officer, church worker, barber,

> sliver-puller-outer, diaper changer, and superintendent of the Saturday night baths. In addition to all of this she is the sweetheart and wife of her husband, the constantly available source of sympathy and affection for her children, and a friend indeed to her neighbors in need. (IE Jan. 1960, pp. 30-31)

The line drawings that accompany this essay show eight carefully groomed women enacting eight of the foregoing roles. And in all but one, the women smile broadly.

Mormon women, too, believe in an all-purpose mother. In 1964, Sister Margaret Richards asked Relief Society Magazine readers, "What Is a Mother?" And she answered:

> Housekeeper, cleaning woman, laundress, seamstress, cook, nutrition expert, chauffeur, nurse, wise shopper, bargain hunter, business manager, and executive vice-president of one of the busiest and most demanding institutions in her country--the home.

Sister Richards, herself the mother of twelve, later added to her list the following: "teacher, counselor, advisor, example . . . what infinite opportunity" (51: 351).

The foregoing expectations are reworded for members of the Priests' Quorum who learned that when they married, their wives would not only be "friends," "partners" and "counselors" but also your "purchasing agent"; your "hostess" and "social secretary"; your "housekeeper"; your "dietitian"; your "cook"; your "bookkeeper"; your children's "teacher" and "counselor"; and a "practical nurse." Boys also read that their wives' services would be worth from "fifteen to twenty thousand dollars per year"; but they should keep that information

to themselves: "If she knows that you know it, she may ask for a raise" (Priests Series B; 1971, p. 141).[2] That likelihood was offset, however, as boys learned the fundamentals of traditional domestic economy: most women provide all these "services" for " . . . a few words of love and affection on your part. This you cannot afford not to give."

As if the foregoing responsibilities weren't enough, for the last thirty-five years the Church has strongly promoted an "Indian Placement Program." Many women have been asked by their bishops to "adopt" a Native American child for a significant period of time. Some families have been foster parents for several children, and some have turned their temporary adoptions into life-time, legal transfers. Whatever the duration, however, the problem of incorporating foreign culture into their own homes has challenged many mothers.

Contemporary modifications. On the other hand, Church leaders are beginning to intensify the role of the father in the home. In 1960, the Improvement Era asserted that a boy needed to spend time with his father to learn, among many other things, "physical courage," the "spirit of adventure" and the fact that "men don't bawl." That article concluded that a strong father in the home taught boys that "final decisions are usually up to Dad"; and author Cleon Skousen observed that the boy who watched mother assert her leadership might "distort his own family

pattern, playing the role of Casper Milktoast" (Feb., pp. 164-167).

Three years later, the Deseret News noted that while a woman could provide "the heart values in family life," she could not "train her sons in special male attitudes necessary to their success as men" (JHC 17 Aug. 1963, p. 5). And in 1964, Elder Ariel Ballif told Relief Society Magazine readers that fathers "provide stability and security" including the "counseling and guidance" which a mother, "by the very nature of her calling may never produce" (51: 794). That statement is interesting because it directly counters the shibboleth that the hand on the cradle has greatest impact.

In more contemporary discourse, the First Presidency in 1971 told both mothers and fathers that parenthood was "the greatest of all responsibilities" (FHEM 1970-1971, n. pag.). And the First Presidency in 1980 said, "The most important calling of a priesthood holder is that of husband and father" (FHEM p. iv). These assertions are far from the priorities of Brigham Young who needed married men to build communities, spread the gospel, and govern new territory. On the other hand, much authoritative discourse also contends that "good" Mormon wives free their husbands from most domestic concerns.

The twentieth century ideal was articulated by Apostle Stephen L. Richards when he urged men to pursue their priesthood assignments; and he told the women:

> Support your husbands in God's work. Encourage them and commend them in the performance of their duties. It is not always easy for a tired wife to forego the help and companionship of her husband in the evening when she needs his assistance and his comfort in the care of the family. It is a real sacrifice to have him go to his duties in the Priesthood. But urge him to go; you will never regret it; your sacrifice will be rewarded. (CR Apr. 1937, p. 51)

When the above paragraph was printed in the Conference Reports, it was the only statement italicized on two adjoining pages.

In 1977, the same values were still prevalent; and Ensign readers learned how a wife might cope best when her husband had Church assignments so demanding that she wanted to "rip out the phone or set fire to his briefcase." Women of such active men were advised to be "flexible," feed him "on time," attend to his clothes, keep a clean house, be "patient," and grow spiritually themselves (July, p. 21).

A Mother is a Saint

The Church is aware of mothers' multitudinous assignments and praises the Sisters for accepting such a role. On the other hand, as suggested above, both praise and expectations can exceed human bounds. For generations, mothers' journey "through the shadows in the valley of death" during childbirth was perhaps appropriately heralded. However, even after mortality rates fell, mothers were touted for sacrificing their lives for their children. In 1913, Church President Joseph F. Smith claimed that "no sacrifice of self . . . time, leisure,

pleasure, no opportunity" outweighed woman's duty and love for her children. Even her very life was "nothing in the balance" (IE May 1913, p. 16).

More women, however, achieve sacrifice through their children; and Mormon mothers--like some others--have encouraged each other in this regard. In 1917, Relief Society Magazine Editor Susa Y. Gates wrote that because women could not fight, they would send their sons into war with their blessing: "We have done our part, we have made our sacrifice" (4: 461-462). That same year, the Magazine reprinted a poem by Alfred Lambourne in which a widowed mother concludes, "Yet must thou die that man be not a slave,/ Still go, be true, and fill a hero's grave!" (n. pag.). In that same volume, "Another Widowed Mother" confessed that her son had enlisted in the army and "through all the smart and tears I thank the Lord I have not raised a coward." The widow also said, "If my country needs my sons, it will have them, and it will get them as volunteers" (304). Her determination might seem harsh, but women typically defined themselves as selfless nurturers and at the same time the sacrificing agents of their more valuable sons.

After the war, American mothers revived earlier, romantic images; and Sophy Valentine provided the Relief Society Magazine with excerpts from her journal:

> My joy, my bliss is complete. Words fail me; for here in my arms, here at my heart, even while I write, is nestling an angel so sweet, so white, so beautiful .

> . . . Oh, how can I tell those who do not know, the joy, the wonderful experience of motherhood!
>
> I am no longer an ordinary woman. I am a mother! I beam and smile on everybody and everything that comes near me. I kneel by my baby's cradle and look at her, and worship God through her. . . . I never was a poetess before. (4: 447)

Although there are touching aspects to the foregoing, the statement that "words fail" the author is proved false by her outpouring and final claim to be a poetess. Also, the phrases are more cliches than fresh; and the vision of a woman writing earnestly with a baby in her arms reduces at least one of the roles involved.

In 1923, "Love's Alchemy" also considered mothers' devotion: When at last the "critical hour" was past, and the "little mother, pale, but radiantly happy," looked into the midwife's eyes, she murmured:

> "Even though I should lose my babe in death, I have had him, I am a mother." . . . She turned her eyes, swimming with love's holy light, upon the wee little creature sleeping so contentedly beside her. (RSMag 10: 236)

One might question the woman's satisfaction in losing her child but retaining her title; however, such writing was typical. The Mormons and the entire nation supported sentimental images of pure and pious mothers--women who died in child birth, supported the war effort, and then battled alcohol and political corruption. In 1929, the Improvement Era even announced that "true women like sacrifice and hard work" (May 1929, p. 577).

In 1936, Edith L. Anderson explained that the sacrifices of motherhood were both physical and social

including "loss of health and youthful vigor," an actual "breaking down" of nerves; the sacrificing of physical comforts, and occasionally "even the necessities of life itself." However, Anderson concluded that no cost was too great for the product: "She reaped as she sowed. Lo, this is her son" (RSMag 23: 375-377).

Pressures to be Perfect

In 1979, a KSL Television documentary concluded that either doctrinal or social pressures to be perfect caused depression in some Mormon women ("Three Faces of Depression, Part II; 17 Feb.) Dr. Jan Stout, a Mormon psychiatrist on the panel, concluded that "a little" pressure might be placed on the Sisters by the General Authorities of the Church; but he believed that Mormon women "tend to apply a great deal of pressure on each other" (Station Transcript, p. 10). Stout may have been correct in his assessment of neighborhood conversations and the proceedings of Relief Society meetings. However, the more authoritative and more "public" male discourse following World War II provided the orthodox images from which women throughout the Church could derive expectations for themselves.

In 1945, a "Church News" editorial told young readers that mothers went down "into the very shadow of death" to give life; did without clothes so children could be appropriately dressed, and would "cheerfully" face "death itself" to help their children (13 Jan. 1945, p.

1). And, in 1952, Apostle Richard L. Evans described his own mother on CBS radio as a woman who always attended to every need of her large family " . . . before she thought of sleep for herself. We remember things she afforded us which she wouldn't afford for herself and places she helped us go to which she didn't go" (qtd. IE July 1952, p. 536).

The "President McKay Era." David Oman McKay became the ninth President of the Church in 1951, and his personal idealism reinforced the pure and martyred dimensions of the mother image. In 1953, President McKay asserted that mothers were "those most worthy of the highest honor our country can give." And he told young girls that "to emulate your mother in her purity is your highest ideal" (JHC 10 May 1953, pp. 3-5). In addition, McKay frequently repeated the short sentence: "Motherhood is just another name for sacrifice."

In 1957, President McKay employed that sentence in a "Church News" editorial titled, "Self-sacrificing Mothers." This article asserted, in part, that the "sweetness" and "greatness" of motherhood is "self-sacrifice." McKay also said, "Motherhood is just another name for sacrifice" (11 May 1957, p. 16). And in 1958, the President claimed that mother's reward for "extreme sacrifice" is the fine character and soul that she creates in her children.

In 1960, Apostle Evans again talked about selflessness; and he quoted John Quincy Adams' tribute:

> My mother was an angel upon earth. . . . Her heart was the abode of heavenly purity. She had no feelings but of kindness and beneficence. . . . She had known sorrow, but her sorrow was silent. (qtd. IE June 1960, p. 522)

That same year, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency offered the following image:

> Who challenged the crisis of life or death that she might give me birth, . . . gave the food . . . watched . . . my every move . . . guarded my sleeping and waking moments . . . worked and nursed, and prayed. . . . Who counseled and pleaded . . . ; who prayed and prayed again--my mother. Who lavished on me all she had to give, to the last morsel of strength, of thoughtfulness, of patience, and charity, and tenderest care, and anxiety, and hope and faith and prayers, and love ever and always--my mother. (ChNews 7 May 1960, p. 19)

This extravagant tribute ends with an interesting turn. After an extensive single focus on his mother, Clark finally asked who gave him all he had of value; and he answered, "the priesthood and my mother."

In 1961, the "Church News" asserted that "true motherhood hesitates at no sacrifice," is "saintly" and also " . . . next to Godhood. It was always intended to be so" (13 May 1961, p. 16). The next year, President McKay titled an essay, "Mother--Another Name for Sacrifice"; and something of McKay's idealism is found in the following:

> Motherhood is just another name for sacrifice. From the moment the wee helpless babe is laid on the pillow beside her, Mother daily, hourly gives of her life to her loved one. . . . Aye, even after her girls themselves become mothers and her sons, fathers, she tenderly, lovingly sacrifices for them her time, her comfort, her pleasures, her needed rest and recreation, and, if necessary, health and life

> itself! No language can express the power and beauty and heroism of a mother's love. (12 May 1962, p. 16)

In 1963, the "News" provided some specifics of mothers' sacrifice:

> She endures a lifetime of service to others, chained to her home and family, her kitchen, her washer, her budget, her eternal household worries, her sewing basket, her endless struggle to make ends meet, her brave efforts to save some money for a rainy day. . . . She passes from the glamor and gaiety of youth to the sober side of middle age. And she has to endure the knowledge that her children do not need her any more and she wonders if they want her about when they have families of their own. (JHC 11 May 1963, p. 1)

That same edition of the "News" observed in another article that mothers' love is "enduring, self-sacrificing and pure, knowing no bounds, and follows even an errant child all the days of his life" (7).

In 1967, President McKay told women that "beauty, modesty, sincerity, sympathy, cheerfulness, reverence and many other sublime virtues" must be displayed by mothers (RSMag 54: 645). After McKay died in January of 1970, the Improvement Era printed a series of his favorite statements including: "Let us also teach girls that motherhood is divine," and "Truly, the holiest words my tongue can phrase, and the noblest thoughts my soul can claim, are unworthy of motherhood" (Feb. 1970, pp. 49; 85).

Recent images of perfection. Praise for mothers' sacrifice did not end with McKay's death. In 1970, Apostle Richard L. Evans titled a CBS address, "Oh! be there,

mothers--be there." And he restated his long-standing interest in part as follows:

> How wonderful to find a mother waiting, watching, being there, as children come home and ask, "Where is mother?" . . . Mothers are the heart of the home: humble, faithful, modest mothers--loving, serving, quietly teaching--. . . doing the duties of each day with love and unselfishness in giving of themselves. A mother at home, a mother waiting, is one of the greatest sources of safety and assurance. . . . Oh, be there, mothers--be there--for your presence will bless your children now, and always, and forever. Oh, be there. (qtd. IE July 1970, p. 75)

The expectation that Mormon women will marry and become at least "superior" mothers continues to the present. Mothers are still told to "be there" in the face of all other interests and demands. In 1975, the Relief Society Course of Study told the Sisters that they should avoid "selfish, personal gratification" at the expense of children, husband or close associates (74). And in 1977, Elder James E. Faust concluded that, "Women blossom because as mothers they must forget themselves" (Ensign Nov., p. 10).

In 1978, President Kimball told the women that "selflessness" was the key to "happiness and effectiveness." And Kimball also noted that Mormons were a strong culture because the Sisters had been "so selfless" and " . . . cared more for the future of their families than for their own comfort. Such good women had a grasp on what matters in life" (Ensign Nov., pp. 102-106). In 1979, Apostle David B. Haight wrote that "unselfishness is synonymous with motherhood," and "a loving mother truly

learns to live for others" (Woman, p 15). That same year, Elder Rex D. Pinegar claimed that his own mother was "the nearest thing on earth to an angel." Pinegar also noted that good mothers teach "the true example of total sacrifice" and never complain in the process. Pinegar then told how members of his family had entered their home to "find traces of tears on Mother's face, but no words of complaint or discouragement ever came from her lips" (Woman, pp. 21-31).

In 1983, members of the Deacons' Quorums learned that, "Motherhood is the one thing in all the world which most truly exemplifies the God-given virtues of creating and sacrificing" (Course A, p. 39). Such work was earlier defined in part as readying the teenage boys' Sunday clothes, fixing their Sunday breakfasts and getting the boys out of bed in time for church--all reasonable responsibilities for young men to assume for themselves (1971, pp. 137; 139). The ideal prevails, however; and in 1983 Richard Lindsay commented in the "Church News" that a good woman would probably choose to "forego many of her own pleasures and to live, for a number of years at least, almost exclusively for others" (25 Sept., p. 10).

Decades of living with a "perfect mother" image have apparently had adverse affect on some Mormon women. The 1979 KSL documentary supports that claim, and women themselves speak to the emptiness of their lives when their sanctioned role is finished. In 1956, a woman

praised her mother in the Relief Society Magazine for meeting the ideal. And the writer innocently observed that her mother ignored maturity in her own children, even when they were parents, themselves: "I was always to her 'her little girl.'" Another tribute reads as follows: "Her life had been lived so completely for her children that she seemed totally incapable of creating a life for herself" (43: 672).

"Empty Nest," by Ida Elaine James, provides more artistic treatment of the same theme:

> All of you now are gone, and I
> Wake each day with a lonely cry . . . .
> The whole day through I cry aloud:
> "How strong I am! How brave! How proud!"
> But when night comes, the heart lies bare,
> Shivering in the lonely air.
> I can only draw around my breast
> The cloak of memories, dear and blest. . . .
> (RSMag 51: 294)

Authoritative discourse currently suggests that women intensify their Church activities or enter community service after their families are raised, and thus extend their nurturant efforts. In addition, the "empty nest" syndrome will end as women become procreators with their husbands throughout eternity. For the present, however, Church leaders encourage all women to produce relatively large families and then rear their children with sacrificial dedication. And these high values distinguish the Church from much popular American practice.

Extensive homemaking efforts are also expected. The Young Woman's Journal once described heaven as "a great, beautiful Home" (11: 552). Apostle Ezra Taft Benson announced that there could be "no genuine happiness separate and apart from the home" (RSMag 43: 422). Apostle Harold B. Lee boasted that, "There is no other people on the face of the earth, that I know anything about, who have the lofty concepts of marriage and the sacredness of the home as do the Latter-day Saints" (IE July 1948, p. 696). And the Young Woman's Journal confessed that a "normal" woman wanted to manage a household and be a "queen of her domain" (32: 572). The same publication also noted that "husband," "children" and "home" were "the sum total" of her concerns (18: 213).

The Rewards

Authoritative discourse assures women that homemaking is a joyful, sacred calling. In 1903, the Young Woman's Journal claimed, " . . . dishwashing is an art, and the turning of a soiled plate into a brilliant, shining thing of beauty is a pleasure as keen as that the artist felt who painted it" (14: 516). In 1918, the Journal asked:

> Isn't it a pleasure to dry your fine china and cut-glass and silverware from a pan of clear water on a snowy tea-towel and see the things glisten as you put them on your shelf. . . . A pile of freshly ironed laundry is a positive delight to me. (19: 27)

And in 1957, Annie Ellsworth extolled the "aesthetic values," glory and enrichment that come from "needlepoint" and the:

> . . . handmade rug, the heirloom, the attractive house frock . . . the colorful flower garden . . . the aroma of freshly baked bread, spicy apples, pumpkin pie, fruit cake, or the smell of savory soup. (RSMag 44: 4-6)

In 1907, the Deseret Evening News added a different dimension to homemaking when it described a real home as a place where " . . . the flame of pure, divinely inspired love burns always, as the fire on the altar of the sacred precincts of the ancient temple" (19 Oct. p. 4). In a 1921 Journal, a woman admitted that when she entered the gates of her own yard, she felt as if she were "walking on holy ground" (40: 947). And Relief Society President Belle S. Spafford quoted John Ruskin at length concerning the rewards of home:

> It is the place of peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home. . . . But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, . . . so far it vindicates the name, and fulfills the praise, of home.
>
> And wherever a true wife comes, the home is always round her. . . .
>
> So far as she rules, all must be right or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good, instinctively, infallibly wise. (RSMag 48: 720)

More recently, authoritative churchmen have advanced a similar but less artistic argument. In 1969, Elder A. Theodore Tuttle claimed that the home is the "source of happiness, serenity, and peace" where family

members can find the " . . . pure, undiluted heavenly joys. There is no substitute" (IE Dec. 1969, p. 107). And in October General Conference of 1977, Elder James E. Faust contended, "Our homes should be among the most hallowed of all earthly sanctuaries" (Ensign, Nov. 1977, p. 11). These images of "glorified" and "sanctified" homes entail extra homemaking effort. But authoritative discourse also provides appropriate instruction and approved examples to help the Mormon woman.

The Procedures

Pioneer Mormon women received advice from Church President Brigham Young, himself. In 1856 he complained:

> There is not one in a hundred that knows how to keep a house as it should be kept. I should judge, from what I have seen, that there are many who do not know the swill-pail from the milk-pail. Others do not know how to make butter and cheese. . . . (JD 7: 162)

However, while Young often criticized the women, he also instructed them in their domestic arts; and in 1869 the President recommended "a light, nice breakfast in the morning" instead of the "forty different kinds of food" which required "three or four hired girls to wash dishes" (JD 13: 153). President Young was not always in favor of the "light, nice" meal for himself, however. In 1969, the Improvement Era admitted that a "typical breakfast" for him would be "cornmeal mush, hot doughnuts and syrup, codfish gravy, squab and strawberries in season" (May 1969, p. 93).

After the Sisters began publishing their own magazines, they usually included a few household hints and recipes. An 1892 Young Woman's Journal explained that "A Plain Tea" required only "bread and butter sliced thin, some plain tea cake, and one style of loaf-cake" together with tea in a "pretty earthern ware teapot, with sugar and cream" (3: 375-376). And in 1896, the same publication advised women to apply dampened sawdust to carpets while sweeping, "and fine salt thrown on occasionally helps to brighten them" (7: 336).

In 1907, the Young Woman's Journal reflected an increased interest in home sanitation as it explained that bacteria and mold must be kept out of kitchens. Women were advised to sanitize their ice boxes by "frequent scalding, fumigating with formaldehyde candles, and sunning it well about once a week." The Journal also recommended a kitchen chair that moved on casters, washing stoves "frequently" but never "blackening" them, and "creamating" all garbage in the coal-burning stove (18: 369).

New theories of scientific home management brought even greater sophistication to the women's publications. In 1923, the Relief Society Magazine described a USDA experiment which demonstrated the energy required to perform routine household tasks. Clothes washing was the most labor intensive of all measured activities--49.9 calories an hour with a simple washing machine. Sewing on a motor operated machine cost only 9 calories per hour;

and dishwashing with a table at the right height consumed 21 calories per hour.

That same article also observed that a too-high table increased dishwashing effort to 24 calories, and a low table to 30 calories an hour. Sweeping was an expensive, 40 calorie per hour, job (RSMag 10: 350). Such data might have enabled Mormon women to improve their own practices and equipment. The most important outcome of such writing, however, probably lay in dignifying the homemaker. The information suggested that housekeeping was a serious profession--a "science"; and by association the woman became a professional, or scientist, herself.

Such features on improved homemaking practices have constituted a consistent focus in the women's publications. However, after World War II, some Church leaders perceived modern technology as a threat, rather than a boon, to Mormon homes. In 1948, the Improvement Era complained that, "Liberation from home drudgery" had not resulted in the "great development" for women which should have occurred. Apparently, women spent too much time playing "unending games" or making the rounds of "numberless movies." The writer even suggested that, "Gandhi was not too far wrong when he resisted industrialization of India; probably he had seen the effects of a carefree and footloose western womanhood" (Mar., p. 304).

Following World War II, secular and Mormon periodicals promoted both "scientific homemaking" and a return to "pioneer handicrafts" to produce a "perfect home." In 1948, the Era told women to dust the tops of books with "an ordinary two-inch paint brush" and to "apply a thin coat of laundry starch" to give enameled walls a new gloss (Jan. 1948, pp. 34; 36). For the last generation, Daryl Hoole's books and tapes on The Art of Homemaking have stressed the value of plans and schedules. And in 1970, Elder Franklin D. Richards observed that the "successful homemaker" kept a "mimeographed sheet with spaces to be filled in by each given hour" as far in advance as possible. Richards also advised women not to tolerate interruptions, and "explain to a friend that you can't talk on the phone now but will call her back" (RSMag 57: 486). Richards' treatise on homemaking was actually titled "Woman's Work in Building the Kingdom"; however, such advice also reflects a "scientific management" posture and interest in homemaking efficiency.

On the other hand, the General Board of Relief Society sent Bess Truman a hand-crocheted table cloth that had taken two years to construct (RSMag 33: 725). And the cover letter claimed that "handwork skills are being perpetuated by our Society" and the cloth was "characteristic of the handwork of Latter-day Saint women." That same year, the Relief Society Magazine

featured homemade pomanders; and Ethel C. Smith claimed that cake mixes cheated women of true baking joy:

> The real thrill of making a cake comes from beating, blending, and mixing the different ingredients a step at a time, and from the perfect product which will reward the cook who gives the ingredients individual attention and introduces them to each other with due consideration. (RSMag 35: 400-401)

In the foregoing, the ingredients of housekeeping take on almost human proportions.

This idea is reinforced in a 1952 feature titled, "A Family is What You Bake It." In that account, a husband brings home fresh bread from the bakery and tells his wife how much he enjoyed his mother's homemade loaves. The next day the wife gave baking a try, and there was something "so wholesome and appetizing" about the aroma of the homemade bread when she opened the oven door, that it made her "tingle all over." That afternoon the woman's son enjoyed a warm slice with honey; and she concluded, "I shall never be too busy from now on to make bread. . . " (RSMag 39: 202).

That same year, the Magazine featured articles on how to turn old greeting cards into wall plaques, making a man's shirt into a girl's dress, making mittens from old sweaters, and making pseudo heirlooms from silhouettes, milk glass and ribbon. In 1956, essentially all Magazine features on applied skills concerned homemaking. Major interests, as determined by frequency of consideration, were general cooking, quilting and small rug fabrication. Other concerns were growing miniature plants, making

wedding cakes, sewing sun bonnets, winter table arrangements, candy recipes and a series of casserole recipes.

In 1956, one-third of all Brigham Young University "Leadership Week" courses dealt with homemaking, one-third with Church service, and the rest focused on literature, art or fashion (RSMag 43: 242). The "Leadership" title of this series is therefore interesting because it appears inappropriate to most of the activities involved. Such titles are useful strategies, however, because they endow what might otherwise be considered semiskilled or leisure activities with an aura of respectability.

In 1964, the Magazine taught women how to decorate picture frames, make house slippers from wash clothes, make papier mache art items, gold leaf home accessories, and work Teneriffe embroidery on pillowcases. Photographs of older women sitting by prodigious handiwork filled many pages. The foregoing and many similar examples are important because during these early postwar years, most American members of the Church enjoyed a relatively high standard of living. Nonetheless, images of thrift and home arts filled a larger percentage of Magazine and Improvement Era pages than was the case during the Great Depression. In addition, as noted in the "Leadership Week" classes, no matter what a program or article might be titled, homemaking skills were the focus of much discourse concerning women.

In addition, after World War II, the Church again intensified its home preparedness efforts and asked all families to store at least a year's supply of food and other necessities to guard against disaster. Church leaders asked women to provide as many of the materials as they could through their own efforts; and many women still preserve such food by canning or bottling in their own kitchens or in welfare centers. Many sew the extra linens and knit, crochet or sew clothing, as well.

The logistical implications for production, rotation, consumption and replacement are impressive; and for some women, the answer has been cooperative efforts. In 1967, the Relief Society Magazine promoted team sewing and promised the Sisters that when two or three worked together in the same home, "little clothes almost seem to roll off the sewing machine and ironing board" as one person cuts, one presses, and the other pins and sews (54: 358-359).

In addition, Mormon homemakers continue to learn that the way to a family's heart is through its stomach; and a good homemaker is a good cook. In 1965, the Improvement Era claimed that no French perfume could make a woman as attractive as "the captivating power held by the aroma of bread baking. . . . " And the author concluded that boys and men of all ages were "helpless to resist its beckoning call" (Jan. 1965, p. 78).

One of the most curious testimonials to the power of food, however, is found in Apostle Boyd K. Packer's essay in the book titled Woman. There Packer extols a Mormon woman who "spent the whole day preparing the finest lunches she could" for a box supper that night at the church. Late in the afternoon, she took hot cherry pies out of the oven; and while she did not want to spoil her husband's appetite for the dinner, she apparently was even more reluctant to deny him an immediate treat. So she served pieces, "smothered in ice cream," to the men in her kitchen. And as she set the "extra large" serving before her husband, she squeezed him and commented on the feasting: "Honey, it kind of makes the gospel seem worthwhile, doesn't it?"--an interesting association. Packer continues, "Later when I teased her a little bit about spoiling him that way, she said, 'He'll never leave me. I know how to treat a man'" (131-139).

The contemporary "partnership" which assigns men increased responsibility for their families has not significantly reduced women's homemaking obligations. The 1984 Relief Society Course of Study still advises women that in addition to normal cooking, cleaning and child care, they should try to store a year's supply of food, and perhaps raise a vegetable garden, cultivate fruit trees, grow berries, can as much of their food supply as possible and learn "to undo and redo, making new clothes out of old ones." They might also spend some of their

"free" time learning to work with "wood and fabrics," refinishing and "antiquing" furniture, recovering chairs, couches, or lamp shades and making other home furnishings from such supplies as electrical wire spools, orange crates, and plywood boxes (70-71).

To be fair, recent Church publications occasionally suggest that children take some responsibility in their homes; and men are told to encourage their children in these efforts or even to help out a little themselves. However, no discourse advises all family members to share equally in homemaking so all may equally pursue other interests. Women are not advised to hire or to board housekeeping help in order to pursue their education or a career. And homemaking, like mothering, is still a time-intensive, labor-intensive assignment for Mormon women.

Summary: The Sisters' Domestic Image

In 1895, the Young Woman's Journal printed the following: "The clever, the witty, the brilliant girls,/ There are few who can understand;/ But oh! for the wise, the loving home girls,/ There's a constant and steady demand" (7: 24). The Mormon woman's "divinely- appointed" role is domestic. Throughout the history of the Church, authoritative discourse has told women that God created them to marry, raise a large family, and manage a household. Such assignments are said to be required, eternal, socially useful, and completely fulfilling.

Domesticity is woman's "sphere." However, even in "her" sphere, the man presides; and this male dominance in domestic concerns distinguishes contemporary Mormon households from most others.

In addition, the ideal Mormon woman is also distinguished as she has embodied the "pure," "pious" and "submissive" virtues of the Old Testament into her domestic realm. "Purity" is a major consideration. Young women have been taught to guard their chastity above their lives; and adultery is still one of the few uncontested grounds for a "temple divorce." (Purity is also a factor in the woman's observance of the "word of wisdom" and her abstinence from caffeine drinks, alcohol and tobacco.)

"Piety" might be considered a pervading aspect of domesticity as the woman's home is "part of her religion." In more specific ways, however, piety is manifested in the Sisters' modest fashions which enable those who receive their endowments to wear a special undergarment. Women are also taught not to raise their voices or use profanity. A righteous Sister will honor the priesthood in her home, including participating in private and family prayers; councils; blessings; and "home evenings" in which gospel principles are taught. And piety is reflected as the Sisters are told to add the ideal of "selflessness" to their domestic service.

Mormon women of all ages are also expected to be "submissive" to priesthood direction. Young girls are

advised to let their dates or boyfriends "take the lead"; and wives should defer to their husbands. In addition, however, authoritative discourse also suggests that women have a subordinate, as well as a submissive, role to play. Advice to women implicitly indicates that they are to enhance the image of the male. Historically, they have been told that men like women who are attractive but less competent than themselves when it comes to physical activities, making decisions and solving problems. Women have also been taught interpersonal ingratiation strategies, but men have not; and the implication is that women should please men more often than men should please women.

Recent changes in domestic assignments include greater acceptance of the single woman with increased pressure on the single man to marry; the promise of full salvation for single women; greater freedom in sexual expression and family planning; and additional help in filling parenting and homemaking roles. On the other hand, if "perfectly" performed, domestic responsibilities never end. Therefore, women are highly praised for mastering domestic skills, raising their still comparatively large families, and for being supportive and loving wives. In addition, women now learn that while they do not have final authority, they are the head of the house in their husbands' absence.

Mormon doctrine justifies the foregoing roles by stating that God created woman to be domestic, and the Sister who fulfills her assignments faithfully will reap an eternity of blessings including worlds to govern with her husband and the company of the Father and the Son. At the same time the Sisters learn that domestic service places them on a pedestal: they are queens in their home, first in their husband's affections, and their work fulfills all their needs and brings them complete happiness. Mothers are dignified as they become partners with God. Such women also bring righteous spirits into worthy homes, and their daily sacrifices earn them respect as domestic saints. Finally, when women submit to male priesthood authority, they are protected against dangers of all kinds. Thus woman's approved roles are justified, dignified and made attractive to the Sisters.

Notes

[1] Within months, President Young said, "I never counselled a woman to follow her husband to the devil"--a modification of Pratt's absolute (JD 1: 77). And most subsequent discourse advises women to obey their "righteous" husbands, or their husbands "in righteousness."

[2] The author is indebted to Shane B. Inglesby for the use of some of his research in the Aaronic Priesthood manuals. Inglesby's study was later printed: "Priesthood Prescription for Women," Sunstone, 10(March 1985): 28-33.

CHAPTER VII

THE WOMEN'S JOURNALS

In contrast to traditional perceptions found in most authoritative discourse, for nearly one hundred years the Mormon women's journals provided a comparatively large number of expanded options and images for the Sisters. From 1872 until 1970, a monthly or semimonthly magazine carried Relief Society news and instructions to and from "the field." From 1872 until 1914, the Woman's Exponent was published an average of twice a month. It was never officially recognized as a Church publication, nor funded by the Church; but it was sanctioned by Church authorities and was widely considered to be the organ of the adult women's auxiliary. In 1914, the Society published an official Bulletin; and from 1915 to 1970 the organization published the monthly Relief Society Magazine.

In addition, from 1889 to 1929 the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association published the monthly Young Woman's Journal. From 1929 to 1970, the Improvement Era, which had previously represented the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, became the general publication for both the young men's and the young women's auxiliaries, and later was recognized as "The Voice of the

Church." The three journals specifically published by and for the Sisters are most interesting, however. More than any other Church publications, they both repeated traditional images of Mormon women and at the same time modified or even reversed those perceptions.

That last statement should not suggest that the women's journals were subversive or even generally unorthodox. Many of the conventional and even harshly narrow definitions of women noted earlier in this study were published in one of the Sisters' magazines. In addition, most of the publications' contents were unrelated to what might be termed "feminist" concerns. On the other hand, for several generations the Sisters' journals produced a relatively large number of nontraditional images of women. Such contradictory information might have confused some readers; or it could have provided a field of "creative ambiguity" from which to choose. And if the latter, the Sisters' publications also justified variant perception and practice.

The most militant prose appeared to be concentrated in the early Woman's Exponent; and the greatest variety in images occurred in that publication from 1872 to the turn of the century. On the other hand, the Young Woman's Journal offered variant perspectives for most of its history; and the final, 1929, volume is a curious mixture of extremely conventional and unconventional perceptions of women. The period just

noted--roughly 1870 to the Great Depression--is a period when woman's image in the secular culture was also being revised. From World War II to 1970, however, the Relief Society Magazine published decreasing options for the Sisters; while from 1960 on, women outside the Church claimed increasing options for themselves.

In addition to the foregoing patterns in content, patterns in authorship, editorship and form also emerge. The women's journals were first largely written and edited by the Sisters. Later, Mormon men provided increasing editorial direction, as well as writing more of the doctrinal essays and lessons. Another pattern appears in the contrast between the "soft news" and feature pages and the more philosophical essays. Reports of women's achievements throughout the world were located in articles on Mormon and non-Mormon women and in continuing short features such as "Of Interest to Women," "In the Realm of Women," "Happenings" and "Woman's Sphere." These pages provided a noticeably wide range of definitions which carried through even the last conservative decades of the Magazine.

After the Church implemented much of the current Correlation Program in 1970, the Relief Society Magazine was discontinued. Adult women now read the Ensign, the general publication for all English-speaking, adult Church members. Young adults of both sexes read the New Era. The Young Women's auxiliary infrequently publishes a lesson

manual for use by teachers, only. And the Relief Society publishes a yearly Relief Society Course of Study for use by all Society members.

In making these changes, feature articles concerning women and soft news pages--the sections which typically carried the greatest variety of images--have been significantly reduced. Ownership has been lost, and the number of editing and writing opportunities have been reduced as well. However, the following analysis will display examples of the extended images available to women during the period when the Sisters did publish.

Ecclesiastical Redefinitions

As noted earlier, the nineteenth century Woman's Exponent and Young Woman's Journal resisted woman's loss of ecclesiastical powers for several years. Both journals, to different degrees, implicitly claimed that women held some special authority as both printed accounts of ordinations, healings, speaking in tongues, and prophecies. On the other hand, of all the categories treated earlier in this study, women's ecclesiastical options have been most limited in the twentieth century publications. After President Joseph F. Smith announced in 1907 that women did not hold the priesthood with their husbands, little more was said on the subject. And after the 1921 Conference denouncing women's practice of spiritual gifts, little challenged that dictum, either.

It is important to note, however, that a few variant perspectives were printed. As cited earlier, a 1917 Journal contended that woman was man's complete equal and shared the gifts, blessings and privileges of the priesthood with him. Emmeline B. Wells repeated that belief in a 1920 Relief Society Magazine; and readers of that publication also learned that Joseph Smith turned the "key" to Nauvoo Relief Society Members and that Zina D. H. Young was a "prophetess" in the Mormon temples. In addition, in 1942, a Magazine sketch of Lucy Mack Smith claimed that "Mother Smith" was "chosen," like Mary, in the "pre-existence" to bear a prophet son. She was the first to see the Urim and Thummin seer stones. And Emmeline Wells confessed that Mother Smith "looked to me a prophet, and I felt I could kneel at her feet" (29: 296). Such reverence for women was unusual at the time of publication.

In 1946, Leah D. Widtsoe told Magazine readers that, "It would be unfair and results would be far from happy if the man received most of the advantages and possessed any great gift from which his life partner were excluded . . . simply because she is a woman." And Widtsoe observed that Joseph Smith " . . . spoke of delivering the keys of the Priesthood to the Church, and said that the faithful members of the Relief Society should receive them in connection with their husbands" (33: 147).

The January 1948 Magazine reprinted Emily Woodmansee's memorial poem to Eliza Snow which was subtitled: "To the liberated spirit of Zion's late Prophetess and Poetess Eliza R. Snow Smith" (35: "Sixty Years Ago": n. pag.). This designation told readers, many of whom were uninformed on the matters, that Sister Snow had been sealed to Joseph Smith in secret plural marriage and that she was once considered to be a "prophetess."

Finally, in the last volume of the Relief Society Magazine, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith repeated the important statement that "The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of delivering the keys of the priesthood to the Church, and said that the faithful members of the Relief Society should receive them in connection with their husbands" (57: 5). Smith did not elaborate on that quotation, but it should have surprised 1970 readers who were consistently told that they "shared in the blessings" of their husbands' priesthood but had no access to priesthood "keys." However, while statements such as the foregoing might have expanded woman's image, they were so thinly scattered over fifty years that they probably had minimal effect.

Redefinitions of Secular Options

In contrast, until well after the Great Depression, the Sisters' publications promoted women's careers in explicit writing; and always the soft-news pages listed the interesting range of women's pursuits

which could be interpreted as implicit role-modeling. In addition, the Woman's Exponent and the Young Woman's Journal promoted universal woman suffrage even during those periods when Mormon women had the vote. Some of this discourse has already been cited in the section of this study titled "Politics." However, the vehemence of the writing has been overlooked; and other secular options for women deserve consideration.

Women's Political Rights

As an early beginning, the Woman's Exponent claimed in 1872 that American women should vote because their "motives . . . are purer, their sentiments more refined and elevated than those of men" (1 Aug. 1872, p. 36). This claim of moral superiority was a typical secular warrant, though it appears curious in a culture which locates much of its moral responsibility in male priesthood bearers. Four years later, the Centennial celebration prompted a rhetoric of revolution:

> Courage and endurance are necessary. Every person should possess a vast amount of fortitude; it is as essential to woman, in the nineteenth century, as for the leader of an army. Are they not striving to battle with CUSTOM. (1 Mar. 1876, p. 148)

Later that same year, the Exponent defended American woman suffrage even though it made "no progress," and exhorted readers to continue the fight: "However long the triumph of Woman Suffrage may be postponed, our work of leavening the public sentiments of America will have been of priceless value. . . ." The Exponent also claimed

that, "The less muscular arm of Woman" battled with the "greed and selfishness and animalism of the existing aristocracy of sex. . . . " And the publication praised the "little army of women and men" who struggled for equal rights for women as "the pioneers of the generations yet to come" (rprnt. EII Summer 1978, p. 1)

After the turn of the century, the Exponent and the Journal followed the campaign for universal woman suffrage; and in 1915, a man expressed his confusion over continued opposition:

> It is not hard to understand why women want to vote, it is not hard to understand why some women do not want to vote, it is not hard to understand why some men do not want women to vote, but it is most difficult to understand why some women do not want other women to vote. (YWJ 26: 532).

The Exponent, however, understood that most members of a culture either accept "orthodox" definitions or risk a confrontation. Thus most defend the status quo:

> It is woman herself who hinders the progress of her own cause in a great degree. Afraid of losing favor with man, and so in many instances exchanges for it her self-respect, yes barters it for a mess of pottage, unsavory and uncertain. (1 July 1876, p. 20)

After North American woman suffrage was assured, the Journal rejoiced. Women had finally achieved: "equal rights before the law, equal opportunities for education, equal pay for equal work, equal political rights," and a position "side by side sharing in the world's work, having a voice in government, and receiving equal recognition for ability and accomplishment" (32: 378). Several similar statements suggest that Mormon women believed that the

Utah State Constitution and the suffrage amendment actually gave women the complete equal rights that some still seek today.

Nearly two decades later, however, Sister Amy Brown Lyman reported on the proceedings of the World Parliament of Women at which the President of the International Council of Women warned: "Women in some of the western countries appear to be losing ground--in some countries they have very definitely lost ground" (RSMag 25: 578). The Utah State Constitution and universal suffrage did not give women all the rights they once thought they would gain, and a new feminist movement developed during the 1960s. At that time, however, no Mormon journal supported the effort.

Woman's "Business" Image

In contrast, the Sisters' publications promoted women's business endeavors to some degree until the final issue of the Magazine. Early Exponent readers learned that women constituted a large percentage of the depositors in certain New England banks and other eastern women owned stock in large corporations. In addition, the national debate on married women's right to own property had just been concluded; and these achievements were all of potential interest to the Sisters in Utah Territory.

The journals also considered women's employment and related concerns. In 1876, the Exponent admitted that while "thousands of women" are "taught and encouraged in

dependence," many women "must necessarily" find an avenue of self-support (rprnt. EII Winter 1978, p. 1). And the next year, "Be a True Woman" claimed that, "Every profession and avenue of labor that opens for women is a blessing; there is no occasion for waiting girls. . . . There is too much real work to be done" (WE 1 Apr. 1877, p. 164). The title, of course, enhanced the claims.

In addition, both the Journal and the Exponent supported women who worked for psychological as well as material needs; and both publications denied that employment damaged woman's marriage. In 1874, the Exponent admitted:

> It has been the popular cry that no woman could be a good, true, loving wife, and at the same time successfully follow any profession. If so, neither can a man do justice to any professional calling and prove a kind, affectionate, and loving husband. (15 Nov. 1874, p. 92)

Three years later, the same publication insisted, "It is time that we utterly repudiate the pernicious dogma that marriage and a practical life-work are incompatible" (15 Aug. 1877, p. 46).

The journals also denied that employment damaged woman's "feminine nature"--a frequent male contention. In 1892, the Exponent observed:

> Everyday you may see on our streets a large number of women, who go quietly and briskly to their different vocations. The majority are stenographers and clerks, though there is a slight sprinkling of dress makers, telephone exchange girls, compositors, and girls who work in book binderies and printing offices. They are not brusque, masculine creatures as you might expect; on the contrary they wear bangs and ruffles and laces just as other women do. Some are pretty and some are

> plain, some plump, some thin, and so far as appearances go, they are like the rest of womankind. . . . (rprnt. RSMag 39: 296)

More surprisingly, the Sisters' publications infrequently suggested that women might appropriately choose a career other than motherhood. As noted earlier, the Young Woman's Journal argued that woman should have "perfect liberty to follow the vocation which comes to her from God, and of which she alone is judge." The Journal also observed that some women's sphere might be the library or the laboratory, instead of the nursery. And the Exponent later wrote:

> For all I demand as the right of woman is free play for doing what is in her nature to do; and if she feels she cannot apply herself to anything else but the study and practice of medicine, all I ask is plenty of opportunity to fit herself through education, for that purpose, and afterwards a chance to try her capacity as practitioner. (rprnt. EII Spring 1982, p. 9)

After the turn of the century, most churchmen promoted domesticity for the Sisters, while the women's journals seemed to support either serial or dual careers. Often such values were located in accounts similar to the following: "Mrs. L. H. Greenwald, . . . the only woman weather forecaster . . . has been commended for exceptional accuracy, and is an acknowledged authority on climatology and meteorology" (rprnt. RSMag 48: 236). Such writing creates role models rather than prescription.

On the other hand, some writing was direct. A 1917 Magazine observed that Columbia and Harvard Medical Schools finally accepted women because they proved

"particularly successful in hospital laboratories and . . . very clever with the work" (4: 605). The author concluded more fervently: "May we not hope that women physicians and midwives for women and children will become again popular as they should be and as the God of nature intended them to be."

Women scientists, scholars, educators and innovators were all admired in the women's publications. In 1923, the Magazine featured Ada Louise Comstock, President of Radcliffe College, and praised her honorary degrees and association memberships (10: 489-490). In 1929, the Young Woman's Journal featured Professor Maria Mitchell, an astronomer at Vassar and the first women elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. After lamenting that "few women" have "mastered" astronomy, author Julia Wolfe advised that "girls will do well to emulate her noble work." And while Mitchell was a single woman, the Journal contended that, "It would be impossible to over-estimate the value of such a life as hers" (40: 458). The foregoing challenges the claim that woman is at her "divine best" within her home.

Finally, some promotion of woman's work was not only direct but militant: In 1899, the Young Woman's Journal warned:

> The divine ferment is at work, my brother, and no matter how conservative or stereotyped you may be, the women-folk of your household are either quietly or surreptitiously reaching out tentative hands to touch some form of organized activity outside your own home, or they are deliberately stifling and

> stultifying themselves in silent submission to your will. (10: 239)

Editor Gates later essentially reversed her position on woman's employment and right to independence, but her early fire is interesting and must have had some impact.

Additional Secular Interests

For the first half of the twentieth century, adult Mormon women were encouraged to donate extensive community service through Relief Society programs or some other agency. In addition, the Magazine honored such efforts by printing impressive biographies of noted civic servants. In 1942, Annie Wells Cannon, a daughter of Emmeline Wells, was praised for being a mother of twelve children, a stake Relief Society president for sixteen years, a member of the General Board of Relief Society for twenty-eight years, a member of the Utah House of Representatives, a suffragist, writer, and member of a half dozen civic clubs and boards of directors. Sister Cannon died in her eighties, still writing for the Magazine (29: 676-680).

A similar example is the 1946 account of Sister Margaret Cummock Pickering, Secretary-Treasurer of the Relief Society General Board who had worked in a similar capacity for the Woman's Civic Center and for the Utah State Society for Mental Hygiene. Sister Pickering was also a member of the executive committee of the Community Chest and served as a director of the Salt Lake County Chapter of the American Red Cross (RSMag 33: 4-5). The

foregoing are but two of scores of women recognized over the years; and readers may have perceived these women as models for themselves. At the least, such recognitions extended woman's image to include professional, business and community involvement.

Articles similar to the two just cited usually occupied one to four pages and presented considerable biographical detail. By far the most common source of atypical role-modeling, however, was found on the soft-news pages in which short paragraphs surveyed the range of women's activities each month. Such accounts made up in provocation what they lacked in detail. For example, in 1890 the Journal recognized a woman minister in Africa and a female postal-express rider who was "young, plucky and pretty, a good shot, a good talker, and a purely western product" (1: 457). And twenty years later the Journal praised Edith Ransom of Perry, Oklahoma, who rode 350 miles on horseback to attend school at Lawrence, Kansas (22: n. pag.).

Similar items appeared too often to cite. In addition, only a small percentage of Mormon women were mentioned in such writing. However, soft news features filled one or more pages of every publication essentially every month; and the information was presented as attractive and valuable. Two popular titles were "In the Realm of Women" and "Woman's Sphere"--both suggesting that the information to follow was appropriate for the Sisters.

The pages were typically located in prominent positions as opposed to filler spots. Illustrations accompanied some titles, and the noted activities were never criticized. Thus readers might have interpreted one woman's achievement as implicit approval for similar effort.

Special Interests and Education

Finally, both the Young Woman's Journal and the Relief Society Magazine expanded "woman's sphere" by providing what might be termed "educational features." Both publications considered such topics as travel, geography, world cultures, government, the fine arts, gardening, fashion and etiquette. As examples, in November of 1926, the lead Magazine article was "Escalante and his Pioneer Band"--an extended account of a Catholic explorer (13: 545-548). And in 1930, the same publication considered both "Dahlias to Love" (17: 645-647), and the book, "The Universe Around Us," by Sir James Jeans (501-503).

The women's publications also addressed topics related to their own programs or of special interest to women. "Hull House" was frequently discussed; and accounts of woman's progress in America were extensively presented. In addition, in 1930 alone, the Magazine considered "A Widow's Protective League" (17: 162-163); "Women in Modern Education" (611-612); "The Franchise" (608-610); and "What the Woman's Movement Means to the World" (613-615). The women's "Social Service Lessons" for 1934-1935 featured

seven social work pioneers including prison reformist Elizabeth Fry, Octavia Hill in "Housing," Jane Addams for settlement houses and Florence Nightengale in nursing.

In June of 1923, Amy Brown Lyman reported that, "The federal Sheppard-Towner act passed Congress on November 23, 1921," and money was available for maternity welfare work in Utah as a result (RSMag 10: 272-274). That same bill was reviewed six years later by Lyman who was General Secretary to the Relief Society and head of their Social Services Department.

In addition, it is useful to indicate the extent to which social welfare issues were developed for lay consideration. In 1926, the Magazine discussed issues concerning adolescence and focused particularly on teen-age emotional problems. And in 1930, the following titles appeared either in the "Lessons" sections or as special features: "Role of Emotions on Digestion and Health"; "The Making of Personality"; "Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child"; "Self-Reliance"; "Crime and Delinquency"; and "Mental Deficiencies and Disabilities." The Magazine also considered "President Hoover's Child Welfare Program" (17: 286-289), and presented frequent reports of the Society's "Social Service Institute." In addition, in 1923 the Magazine explained "What Utah Does for the Deaf" (10: 116-130). And in 1930, Utah's "Training School for the Feeble-Minded" was described for Society women (17: 22-24).

The Young Woman's Journal, of course, displayed less interest in reporting the progress of social services programs. In contrast, the Journal focused more on world travel, world cultures, the fine arts and fashion. The point to remember, however, is that both periodicals presented large quantities of educational features. And all such writing expanded the Sisters' "secular" universe.

Woman's "Domestic" Image

The Sisters' publications also considered woman's domestic image and relationship to man--denying many narrow definitions. In 1890, the Young Woman's Journal advised girls:

> . . . not to depend for happiness upon the flatteries of men. . . . They say things . . . that you know, and they know, are false. They say you are an angel. You know you are not. . . . The same thing that they told you on this side of the drawing-room three minutes ago they said to some one on the other side. . . . Oh, let no one trample on your self-respect. (1: 192)

Thus the Journal promoted independence and warned girls that typical social discourse was not only insincere, but often degrading to women. In contrast, most writing instructed young women in just such courtship conventions.

In addition, the Journal occasionally redefined morality in terms of intent instead of behavior. For several years after the turn of the century, writer George Eliot was featured in Journal Literature lessons. And in 1907, Sister Alice Louise Reynolds explained Eliot's failure to marry her lover as follows: "While no marriage

ceremony was performed she united her life with his, realizing full well the odium that would come to her thereby. They helped each other in their work and became more devoted to each other every year" (18: 46). Their adultery was not attacked, and their union appeared attractive.

On the other hand, conventional marriage was often criticized. In 1873, the Woman's Exponent complained that most men considered their wives to be little more than necessities: A woman may:

> . . . manage his house, cook his dinner, attend to his wardrobe, always on hand if . . . wanted and always out of sight if not needed. He doesn't mind kissing her occasionally, when it suits him, but he never thinks she has any thoughts of her own, any ideas which might be developed; she must not have even an opinion, or if she has she mustn't express it, it is entirely out of place; she is a subject, not a joint-partner in the domestic firm. (1 Jan. 1874, p. 118)

Later, the Young Woman's Journal defended those "Women Who Seem Men." J. S. Robinson admitted that people often comment derisively that a strong woman "wears the pants" in a household. However, the author also noted that man had often "made a fool out of himself." In addition, the woman recognized that she had "told him so, and time and time again. . . .

> And thus she's come to lead affairs,
> And all by her good sense,
> While he to serve and everywheres
> Has gradually gone hence.
>
> Then do not look upon her as
> A despot, like folk do,
> But look upon her as she is--
> The better of the two. (7: 137)

In 1890, the Journal carried concern over marriage a degree further and noted that the Mormon woman would wait to marry until she had " . . . a suitable opportunity; but she is resolved to remain single rather than marry an inferior man" (1: 316).

The Sisters' publications also printed variant images of Mormon mothers. In 1915, the Journal argued that those women who did not want to follow traditional roles " . . . should be permitted to make such a choice and their education should bring them to the point of highest efficiency after the choice has been made." And author Dr. E. G. Gowens, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction, asked, "Is it not better that there should be fewer mothers than that there should be some, even though the number be small, to whom motherhood is hateful?" (26: 532).

In 1929, the Journal recommended "10 Outstanding Magazine Articles" for Mormon girls to consult (40: 192). The subjects included Catholicism in America, a biography of George Sand, and an article titled "I Don't Want to be a Mother" by Marjorie Lawrence. Curious as those selections might appear, their listing in the "lessons" section, the title of the list, lack of any criticism, and the source of the articles including Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's, and Harper's Magazine should have enhanced the proposed considerations.

In 1939, the Relief Society Magazine published "Not Understood" in which a woman rejected her self-effacing status and returned to college with the remark that her children "must solve their own problems" (26: 396-400). In 1946, Camilla Eyring Kimball told Magazine readers that, "Some mothers enjoy being martyrs. They get a certain morbid satisfaction out of feeling that they do all the giving and take nothing in return." But Sister Kimball rejected that image and advised, "Mothers must learn to accept favors graciously and appreciatively that children may know this satisfaction" of giving (35: 293).

Along those same lines, Mildred Bennion Eyring claimed in 1952 that motherhood was "its own reward, or punishment" depending on the woman's skills. And she admitted that, "Mothers are just people. . . . There are all kinds." Eyring also made the unconventional observation that, " . . . the biological accomplishment of motherhood does not insure affection for the child" (RSMag 39: 283). Such writing is particularly noteworthy because woman's role was not challenged so much as was her nature--a more powerful dimension of woman's image.

In addition, the Sisters' publications also attacked the perfect home and homemaker. In 1896, the Young Woman's Journal challenged the value of rich dining and promoted Maud May Babcock's diet of simple soups, fresh vegetables, many salads, fruits and baking with

coarse flours (7: 425). Apparently Sister Babcock believed that such "departure from old customs" would not result in "starvation or crankiness" although it relieved woman's efforts in the kitchen. In 1900, the Journal promoted cooperative, rather than specialized, house-labor; and the editor observed that years earlier, Brigham Young had said that, "The work of cooking, serving, washing and ironing would be done outside of the home, and that, too, mostly by men, who were stronger, and were therefore capable of heavy and prolonged exertion" (11: 183).

Along those same lines, in 1929 the Young Woman's Journal observed that the "scheduled" dimension of scientific home management overlooked the real purpose of a home which was "continued comfort." The Journal complained that, "In the name of cleanliness, health, comfort and peace of mind are sacrificed." The author therefore proposed replacing all arbitrary schedules with infrequent cleaning, "on demand," only (40: 391). Later the Relief Society Magazine concluded that an "immaculate house may not always be a happy home," and a woman must "keep up constructive interests outside her home that she may be a more vital and interesting individual" (35: 293).

The foregoing were all inconsistent with prevailing stereotypes: girls must comply with courting conventions; marriage is necessary for all women; marriage is inherently satisfying; motherhood is necessary for all women; and mothers are naturally nurturant, selfless,

devoted to and fulfilled by their home life. However, in addition to challenging such specific roles, articles in the Sisters' publications also challenged conventional perceptions of woman's nature as well.

Women Should Be Independent

The Young Woman's Journal printed a number of series on famous "strong" women including women sovereigns, suffragists and feminists, writers and editors, business women and women in the fine arts. Some of these women were Utah natives like "Rose Hartwell--the Utah Colorist" (22: 127-132); but many were not. Performers Maude Adams and Geraldine Farrar were considered (14: 244-249; 26: 362-365). And the Journal produced articles on "People I Have Known"--typically "local" women of varying rank and impressiveness. Outside of any "thematic series," however, the Journal also devoted countless articles to famous women such as Helen Keller.

Some of the most interesting strong women in the Mormon publications were the women of other religions. The Young Woman's Journal in particular featured several Catholic Saints including Joan of Orleans in 1899, and St. Cecelia in 1907 (18: 403). Author Alice Louise Reynolds claimed that St. Joan was a "wonderful character" who had "undying faith in her mission." And she quoted without comment the observation that the French people "saw the hand of God" in Joan's crusade. "How could they fail?"

(10: 257). The journals also investigated "The Mohamadan Women of Turkey" (YWJ 26: 366+) and others--all of whom appeared admirable and part of a universal sisterhood. Such bonding created the unusual condition in which gender membership was valued in a Mormon publication as well as religious affiliation.

Directives for Independence

The most provocative redefinitions of woman's nature and male/female relationships are found in the early Woman's Exponent or Young Woman's Journal. For example, in 1874 the Exponent wrote:

> All honor and reverence to good men; but they and their attentions are not the only source of happiness on the earth, and need not fill up every thought of woman. And when men see that women can exist without them being constantly at hand, that they can learn to be self-reliant or depend upon each other for more or less happiness, it will perhaps take a little of the conceit out of some of them. (30 Sept. 1874, p. 67)

In 1890, the Journal made a related observation:

> In times past, women have . . . done many improper things; and one of them is they often preferred men's opinions to their own and even yielded points of conscience for the sake of pleasing them, until, very naturally, they are looked upon by men as shallow, weak, and contemptible. . . . A course of self-reliance and self-assertion will restore our credit. (1: 442)

Such writing is interesting because Mormon women do not often criticize men in formal, public discourse or suggest that they have been abused by their "protectors." However, in 1875 another column complained:

> While men are determined to keep women subordinate, they will of course pamper these "defects in her, because it is flattering to their own self-love," and

> they cry out "We want women left us and not female men," and talk and write about making room for a "third sex." (WE 1 July 1875, p. 21)

In 1877, Editor Wells expressed a related complaint: The "majority of men" hold the rights of women "in derision" and claim that a dependent woman is "dearer, lovelier, more companionable than when she steps out of her sphere and seeks to become equal in education, and in self-reliance to man" (WE 1 July 1877, p. 20).

A similar item appeared a year earlier in a column titled "A Word About Women":

> We are told that "in the last days men's hearts would fail them," &c., but we had no idea it would be attributable to women, yet it is even so from the pulpit down; this is idol-breaking by women, and though men speak of her as silly, vain, and frivolous; they will perhaps find ere long that woman is terribly in earnest; that she is no longer willing to be trammelled by narrow conventionalities, but to step forward on a broader platform, undaunted by the sarcasm or even foul aspersions cast upon her. . . . Does it detract from their dignity because women prove themselves capacitated for the same positions as men, is this any usurpation of power or of rights?

The author observed in conclusion that if men are "really superior to us let them move on, 'there is room higher up'" (WE 1 Nov. 1876, p. 84).

The foregoing all reflect rather fundamental feminist thought. The 1874 piece argues that women needn't build their lives around men, but can find happiness alone or with other women. It also suggests that men's egos are a problem. The 1875 article agrees that male conceit weakens relationships, and suggests that men manipulate women to serve selfish needs. In 1877, Wells noted that

men threaten women to accept subordinate roles. The 1890 essay suggests that women must manipulate men if they hope to achieve their own ends. And the 1876 piece recognizes gender conflict which men "from the pulpit" down attribute to women's inappropriate goals. On the other hand, the writer warns that women are determined to advance in spite of male opposition. Other articles express this same resolution.

In 1876 the Woman's Exponent requested that women be allowed to " . . . shine by the intelligence of their own minds and not by that reflected from man. . . . Let women be qualified to stand alone if necessary, . . " (qtd. EII June 1976, p. 5). And a year later, the Exponent asked again that woman:

> . . . train herself to fill any position and place of trust and honor as appropriately and with as much dignity as her brother man. . . . That she may be recognized as a responsible being, capable of judging for and maintaining herself, and standing upon just as broad, grand and elevated a platform as man. (1 July 1877, p. 20)

In 1890, the Young Woman's Journal even observed that "where woman is the stronger, she takes the precedence of man," and men should acknowledge women as their competitors in "the arts or trades" (1: 175).

The Exponent also recognized the obstacles women faced in negotiating change, but encouraged women to persist:

> Woman's voice should be heard in defense of her rights, . . . though she may be derided under the appellation of "female rooster." There are some of the opposite gender who would intimidate us and try

> to make us believe we do not know anything but to wash, scrub, make or mend. . . . If there are men who do not know your worth and position before your Maker, show them that you sense it. . . . Jeers and uncouth remarks should not deter us from our duty. (rprnt. EII Sept. 1976, p. 1)

And a year later the publication claimed:

> A new era has been ushered in, mainly through the exertions of self-made women, . . . Yet a vast amount of narrow-mindedness and prejudice still remains to be wrestled with, and requires almost superhuman courage and endurance, and workful waiting, . . . (rprnt. EII Mar. 1977, p. 1)

In addition to printing complaints, the women's publications also proposed new values and systems of socialization. In 1873, Sister Lu Dalton argued that girls should be trained in "bodily strength and symmetry" as well as the boys:

> She should learn to skate, to swim, to play ball, and--yes to shoot! Self protection demands this last in these wild, western countries, and to my mind it would be far more pleasing to see our girl going out on shooting excursions with her brothers and sturdily bearing home at night the game she has captured, than laced up in corsets, with smelling bottle at nose. . . . It is high time that such nervous timidity, not to say affection, should pass into disfavor. And the very best way to accomplish this desirable end, would be to give the girl such confidence in her physical prowess that she would feel herself equal to any small contingencies. (rprnt. EII Mar. 1975, p. 15)

The foregoing items were located in exposition and developed as direct and confrontive philosophical issues. Such writing is unexpected in a Mormon woman's journal. Gradually, however, the women published fewer explicit criticisms; and strong women appeared more frequently in narratives as possible role models.

Implicit Arguments

Sister Alice Louise Reynolds usually recognized the atypical traits of famous women in her Young Woman's Journal lessons. In 1899, she suggested that George Eliot had been unfairly criticized for lacking "spirituality," and being "atheistic" and "cynical" when in fact Eliot was really "a woman of the heroic type, who dared defy conventionaltiy and do what she thought right." Reynolds also praised Eliot for her justifiable "contempt for those country clergy men who were grossly ignorant on all conceivable subjects." And she asked, "How could she be honest and do other than what she did? Nowhere round her did she find people possessed of her strength" (10: 109). That lesson perhaps challenged some readers' perception of the clergy as well as their perception of women.

Only a month later, Reynolds praised Eliot for her "knowledge of Greek, Latin, Italian, French and German." The novelist was described as multitalented with a "massive" head, large mouth, and square jaw--none of the typical "feminine" characteristics. Yet she was termed "beautiful" and a great woman (YWJ 10: 157-160). In a similar vein, Reynolds depicted Elizabeth the First as a powerful queen with a "harsh, man-like voice," "impetuous will," great "pride" and given to "furious out-bursts of anger." Apparently Elizabeth also swore at her ministers "like a fish-wife," was extraordinarily vain, and knew nothing of "womanly reserve or self-restraint." For all

these faults, however, Reynolds noted that as a queen, Elizabeth "received the most generous eulogy and recognition" (YWJ 10: 224+).

Later, Reynolds admired Elizabeth Barrett Browning because "her education was along lines usually given to boys," she read "almost every" language and employed "zeal in defense of her sex" (YWJ 18: 139+). Readers later learned that Jane Austin was "methodical and systematic, . . . original and independent in her ideas and fearless in expressing them" (YWJ 18: 202). And Ruth May Fox described Victoria as a girl who was "extremely willful" and "determined," and as a queen who "never forgot that she was Queen 'by the Grace of God,'" while Albert was simply "the Queen's husband" (YWJ 40: 48-50).

The Mormon Journal was also free in praise of what might be termed "radical" women. Over the years, Madame de Stael, Methodist minister Anna Shaw, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and others were praised for wit, courage, independence and sometimes even "antisocial" behavior. And Mary Wollstonecraft, author of A Vindication of the Rights of Women, was described as a justified reformer who:

> . . . found some rather anarchistic ideas of marriage. Love and union alone meant marriage to her. Lack of congeniality, abuse and distrust were no marriage no matter how many words had been gibbered before a priest. And with good reason she advocated some radical views on women's rights. (YWJ 22: 629)

The Sisters' publications also depicted less-well-known women who displayed unusual strength. In

1921, the Journal featured a series titled "One Woman's Success in Homesteading" in which a single woman head of household proved that "a woman could and would make good." Several issues described her success in building a home, fencing her land, raising crops and battling nature. And the woman, herself, concluded:

> We have fought the good fight and enjoyed freedom. . . . I would like to say to every woman the world over, abandon the traditions of those many generations, step independently into God's free, open air, and claim that which is your right. . . . I'm not yet entering old age at sixty-four, for there are still many castles in the air. (32: 287-288)

The journals also featured atypical Mormon women, and praised them for varying achievements and strengths as well as for domestic and Church service. Examples are Mrs. Jennie Knight and Mrs. Amy Lyman who were recognized for their involvement in social work, or Mrs. Jeanette Hyde and Mrs. Annie Cannon for their success in politics. In such writing, the women were usually identified by their Christian names as well as their surnames; and "Mrs." was the common title. In contrast, after World War II Mormon women were typically identified as "Sister" and by their husbands's first and last names.

The journals also praised the achievements of auxiliary leaders or other prominent churchwomen both alive and dead. In 1903, the Journal presented the "Life of Vilate M., Wife of President Heber C. Kimball" (14: 305). The first half of the title was printed twice as large as the second half and centered above it. (In

contrast, in 1944 the Improvement Era featured "A Mormon Wife. . . The Life of Augusta Winters Grant" (Aug. 1944, p. 752). The first half of the title was again twice the size of the second half and stressed the woman's relationship to her husband rather than her separate identity.)

In 1905, the Journal featured "A Biographical Sketch of President Elmina S. Taylor" among many other Mormon women (16: n. pag.). In 1907, it was "Emily Hill Woodmansee, Poetess" (18: 51) and others. Emmeline B. Wells was frequently honored in articles and sketches. In 1915, the Journal extolled "Dr." Wells (the degree is honorary) who "never failed in fidelity to women any more than in fidelity to the lord" (26: 141). Six years later, the Journal claimed in memorial that Wells was " . . . a leader born, . . . progressive to a marked degree, a woman of strong opinions which she did not hesitate to express" (32: 344+). In addition, "Louie B. Felt" and other officers and board members of all the women's auxiliaries were recognized in feature articles.

The Relief Society Magazine was equally generous. It honored the mothers of the executive officers as well as officers and general board members from all the women's auxiliaries and other women "of note." In addition, less-well-known Mormon women were also featured in the Sisters' publications. In 1927 the Young Woman's Journal described "Canada's Girl of the Golden West," a "Miss

Byrde McCarthy." This spunky young Sister "ventured over terrifying peaks, before untrodden by woman and there bagged a huge mountain ram." And, as Lu Dalton had recommended earlier, Byrde was apparently as much at home with the "rod and reel as with the gun." The Journal also noted that this Mormon girl was a ranch girl, a gold-medallist from the college, a home-lover, devoted to the arts, and "a strong, buoyant, self-reliant girl" (38: 552-553). This kind of feature-writing provided atypical role models for younger readers while perhaps enhancing their appreciation of their sex.

In addition, in 1923 the Magazine featured "Mothers in Israel"--sketches of Mormon women pioneers. "Camilla Clara Mieth Cobb: First Kindergarten Teacher in Utah" was one of that number (10: 500-501). And in 1926, "Aunt Hannah Sharp and the Muddy Mission" (13: 493-502); "Pioneer Reminiscences of Mrs. Margaret Stalle Barker" (13: 337-342); and "Reminiscences of Mrs. John Sharp" (13: 345-352) also honored the women pioneers. Such accounts were numerous and filled with the details of privation and courage. Therefore, as woman's image narrowed in other authoritative discourse, these biographies provided strong contrasts for the readers' consideration.

Finally, many of these kinds of articles depicted women in amazing if not heroic action. One example will suffice, however, because it represents a very popular, but lengthy, genre. In 1938, the Magazine honored Jeanette

Dansie Crane: When Jeanette's ninth baby was three days old, Brother Crane was called on a mission to Great Britain. Sister Jeanette "kept him there for two years, sending him a dollar or two at a time, never more than five, and kept her family besides." The year after Brother Crane returned, he died. Sister Crane, now a mother of ten, took over his positions as school trustee, postmaster, and storekeeper. She took in "boarders, picked fruit and even did laundry work, but never did she accept charity." At the time of publication, the woman was still earning her own living by crocheting and making quilts (RSMag 25: 567-570).

Infrequent pieces of fiction also depicted women as independently strong and competent. For example, just prior to the Second World War, when even the Magazine was losing its pluralistic perspective, "Ghost Writer" told of a bright woman who wrote all of her senator-husband's speeches. After learning that he planned a divorce, she joined his opponent's staff; and the couple were reconciled after he lost his election (26: 236-242).

From the onset of World War II to 1970, however, almost all atypical role-modeling was located in brief accounts of women's achievements in the Magazine's soft news pages. For example, while Mormon women were told to remain at home during the emergency, Magazine readers learned that the President of Wellsley College was appointed head of the Women's Navy Reserve, and a Creek

Indian was the first to enlist in the Women's Army Corps (29: 637). At the same time, in the civilian sphere Princeton admitted women to its engineering programs (29: 475).

In 1946, Belle Benchley was curator of the San Diego Zoo (RSMag 33: 314), journalist Charlotte Knight represented the Air Force Magazine at the Bikini atomic tests, and Marjorie Spikes was a British attache in Washington (533). And in 1948, "Woman's Sphere" noted that a large American firm was granting paid maternity leaves (35: 393); the U.S. Women's Bureau claimed that any skilled woman could start a career after forty (453); and Shanghai, China, had a successful "woman's bank" (669).

The temptation is strong to cite the many women who succeeded in many other spheres. For example, the Magazine recorded the political careers of Clare Booth Luce, Margaret Chase Smith, Sarah Hughes, India Edwards, Maureen Newberger and Golda Meier, among others. It cited the achievements of athletes like Florence Chadwick. Physicians like Emma Sadler Moss and Connie Guion were honored. Pilots, state Supreme Court Justices, Nobel Prize winners, Russian astronauts, and "winch operators" like Madame Cousteau were acclaimed. There were "underwater scientists," and financial analyists; entrepreneurs, journalists and photographers. The list of talented, accomplished women who appeared in the Mormon Magazine requires a book of its own.

The foregoing "liberal" aspects of the Relief Society Magazine must be kept in perspective. From World War II until 1970, that publication explicitly advised readers to confine their interests to home, church and volunteer community service. At the same time, however, the soft news pages honored women who achieved in other endeavors; and these reports could be interpreted as implicit approval for the behavior in question. Such writing added ambiguity to an otherwise rigid convention, and the authoritative source of the information might have justified similar efforts on the part of some Sisters.

Mormon Women Cease Publishing

Whatever the Magazine's impact, however, a near century of publication by Mormon women came to an end in December of 1970. In the November 1969 issue, General President Belle S. Spafford announced "with genuine regret" that the price of the Magazine would increase from $2 to $2.50 a year, beginning in 1970. Such increase seems peculiar if she knew of its short duration. In that same issue, Spafford also increased the amount of the cash awards for the Poetry and Short Story Contests and instructed outgoing local presidents to turn over a financially strong organization to their successors--perhaps not knowing that the funds would soon be lost.

By the following June, however, most Relief Society women learned that changes were coming. That month's issue carried a black bordered notice stating that

"in compliance with the directive of the First Presidency," the Relief Society Magazine would discontinue publication with the December 1970 issue. The General Board expressed thanks for the loyalty that sustained the publication, for the nearly 300,000 subscribers, and offered "enthusiastic support for the new adult magazine" (57: n. pag.).

In August, a follow-up notice also referred to the "directive of the First Presidency," and explained the procedure for transferring subscriptions from the women's journal to the "adult magazine." Beneath that notice was a paragraph titled, "Relief Society Literary Contests Discontinued." And the paragraph closed with " . . . gratitude and appreciation to the many talented women . . . whose thoughts, . . . have added to the quality and value of the Magazine" (RSMag 57: 582). Across the page, Sylvia Lundgren advised, "Keep the Magazines." And she noted, "All the money in the world cannot buy the wealth of inspiration in these dear little Magazines" (583).

In November an additional "Notice to Subscribers" announced that, "in compliance with the directive of the First Presidency" the Magazine would discontinue publication. Readers were told how to convert their subscriptions to the new adult journal (RSMag 57: 810). And in December, Counselor Marianne Sharp's editorial was titled "Facing Forward." The opening line noted that changing times, combined with a belief in continuous

revelation, had "brought the end of the journey to the Relief Society Magazine." Sharp also stated that times were different from when it began in 1914; and a "new era" was beginning in which Relief Society women would join with other adult members of the Church to support a general Church publication.

Sharp's concluding paragraph reads as follows:

> As we detail and recall nostalgic memories, we still, obedient to the priesthood and receiving direction from them, face forward in step with the new era of the 1970's with anticipation and a sense of dedication and support for the all-adult magazine. Moriturae te salutamus. (RSMag 57: 894-895)

Thus the Magazine died.

One wonders, however, if the editors of the Woman's Exponent would have stepped away so obediently from their own publication. In May of 1883, that journal observed:

> There is no better method of communication between people engaged in any public enterprise than that of a newspaper, and until women talk to each other freely in this way and express their views and feelings, no great, tangible change will take place in the advancement of the masses of women. (15 May 1883, p. 188)

In considering the effect of women's writing on the men in the Church, the Exponent also concluded:

> I ofttimes think it would be well if the brethren would read our paper more than they do and become better acquainted with the sisters' feelings and desires, and perhaps we could work to one another's interest better than we do now. ("Plain Talk," signed "D. K.," 15 April 1881, p. 170)

Summary: The Sisters' Publications

The Sisters' publications differ from most contemporary Church discourse in that the former provided a broader universe of information, expanded options for behavior, and the continued presence of strong and independent women. For many years, the Woman's Exponent carried as its masthead the slogan, "The Rights of the Women of Zion, and the Rights of Women of All Nations." The first editorial also focused on women's bonding and promised that the journal would:

> . . . endeavor, at all times, to speak freely on every topic of current interest, and on every subject as it arises in which the women of Utah, and the great sisterhood the world over, are especially interested. (1 June 1872, p. 4)

Brigham Young, himself, intended the Exponent to collect a "history" of the women of the Church.

After some staff changes, the Relief Society Magazine in 1923 explained its purpose as follows: "The future of the Magazine will not be separated from its past." It was to be "the organ of the Woman's Relief Society"; an outlet for "the literary talent of the women of this intermountain country"; and a magazine that "shall endeavor to place before its readers stories of real achievement, particularly as they are reflected in the lives of women." The editor also observed that, "Fortunately for the world," such events were not "confined to the realm of man's achievement" (10: 254).

Finally, Susa Young Gates, Editor of the Young Woman's Journal, told readers of the first issue: "Remember girls, this is your own magazine. . . . It is designed to give some biographical sketches of those women who by worth and talent have received name and fame among our people." Gates also said, "This it is hoped and believed will give an impetus to the upward aim and aspirations of Our Girls" (32). And Gates concluded:

> Let its field of usefulness be extended from Canada to Mexico, from London to the Sandwich Islands; and then as years go by let us send it forth on its mission of love and peace to every nation under the sun, bearing with it a message of freedom to every daughter of woman. (1: 32)

As promised, information ranging from the facts of botany to social work to doctrinal concerns filled the magazines; woman's roles and issues were discussed; and women of all denominations were praised for their varying achievements. Unfortunately, the information and examples provided in this chapter do not adequately depict the extended universe, the prevalence of options, nor the strength of woman's image in the early volumes of the Sisters' publications. Mormon women who read their journals from 1872 until the approach of World War II encountered a degree of pluralism that is not often duplicated in contemporary Church publications. In addition, variant perceptions regarding woman's nature and roles were justified by strong warrants.

Women sometimes read that they were more competent than men, and should obtain rights because of their "moral

superiority." Women learned that they were oppressed by customs which included idealized perceptions of marriage, motherhood, and homemaking. They learned that some customs arose out of male selfishness and were maintained by a system of mutual male/female manipulation and fear. The publications also attacked existing conventions when they told women that they did not need men to be happy.

Expanded images were also justified on the following grounds: morality was a matter of intent, not action; secular involvement need not damage family relationships; unconventional women succeeded in their activities, drew acclaim and were happy; and secular work was a blessing--to the woman herself and to the community. In addition, the Sisters' publications occasionally argued that God designed woman as a multitalented being, that woman's vocations came to her "from God," and she "alone" was able to understand that assignment. Finally, some journals encouraged women to recognize the restrictions of convention and to fight for equal rights.

Not many articles were as explicit as this summary has been, of course; but the sedimenting of many articles justifies these conclusions. Thus, the Sisters' publications often redefined the universe to give greater visibility and responsibility to Mormon women.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RHETORIC OF FORM

A Woman's Wish

. . . I am tired,--so tired of rigid duty,
So tired of all my tired hands find to do!
I yearn, I faint, for some of life's free beauty,
Its loose beads with no straight string running through!

Aye laugh, if laugh you will, at my crude speech;
But women sometimes die of such a greed,--
Die for the small joys held beyond their reach,
And the assurance they have all they need.

These lines are part of a six-stanza poem that appeared in the Millennial Star as an unsigned, back-page filler in 1887 (49: 624). Women infrequently wrote articles and poetry for the Star as they infrequently wrote similar materials for the Improvement Era and other Church publications. And whenever the range of women's definitions have been included in general Church discourse, the composition of that discourse has become more pluralistic.

In addition, men have sometimes responded to women's variant meanings by repeating them or at least addressing the issue in question. In October General Conference of 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball said, "Our sisters do not wish to be indulged or to be treated condescendingly; they desire to be respected and revered

as equals" (Ensign Nov. 1979, p. 49). Kimball also claimed that the Church honored women and that God loved both sexes impartially. In that same address, however, the President advised the men to make their marriages "full partnerships" while exercising only "righteous dominion" over their wives. And this articulation of equal but subordinate status is a significant inconsistency in the Mormon woman's image.

In addition, most male Church leaders describe their attitudes towards the Sisters with such terms as "love," "respect," "protect," and "honor"--suggesting an appreciative stance. On the other hand, authoritative, public discourse that is directed not towards "attitudes," but towards some other topic, actually discloses less respect for Mormon women than for Mormon men. Professed and displayed attitudes do not match.

The foregoing conditions warrant a brief study of the rhetoric of form. The discrepancy between a professed appreciation for woman and disclosed negative perceptions will be demonstrated by contrasting positive and negative definitions. The presence or absence of women's perceptions in general Church discourse will be reviewed. In addition, throughout this study the relationship of woman's "nature" to her "role" has been suggested but never developed; and this "causal" link will be discussed as a major source of the Sisters' role assignments.

Honor for the Natural Woman

The Church's position concerning the "natural" woman was probably well articulated by Apostle Boyd K. Packer in 1973. In an article titled "Speaking Today: The Equal Rights Amendment," Packer claimed:

> There are basic things that a man needs that a woman does not need. There are things that a man feels that a woman never feels.
>
> There are basic things that a woman needs that a man never needs, and there are things a woman feels that a man never feels, nor should he.

Packer then observed that, "These differences make women, in basic needs, literally opposite from men."

The Apostle continued:

> A man, for instance, needs to feel protective, and yes, dominant . . . in leading his family. A woman needs to feel protected, in the bearing of children and in the nurturing of them.
>
> I am for protecting the rights of a woman to be a woman, a feminine, female woman; a wife and a mother.
>
> I am for protecting the rights of a man to be a man, a masculine, male man; a husband and a father. (Ensign Mar. 1973, pp. 6-9)

The foregoing traditional definitions of male and female nature in part provided warrant for the Church's opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and other major changes in life style for Mormon women. It is important to remember, however, that woman's "nature," "role" and all other constructs considered in this study vary even within the relatively tight culture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One should therefore delimit the range of definitions, identify the recurrent or prevailing

concepts, and describe variant patterns as they appear significant.

In this analysis, variant definitions of woman's nature will be displayed first. They have justified a range of behaviors over the history of the Church. Following that review, traditional definitions will be examined as a more representative part of the orthodoxy. These are the images of "maternity," "charity" and "dependency" which justify domestic assignments for Mormon women.

Variant Perceptions

As noted earlier, in July of 1869 Church President Brigham Young said that women would make good mathematicians, accountants, lawyers and chemists; and they should "develop the powers with which they are endowed" (JD 13:61; emphasis added). In addition, in 1897 the Young Woman's Journal described an "emerging breed" of female as independent: "The distinguishing characteristic of the new woman is her intense longing for the same freedom of action that her brothers have" (qtd. EII June 1976, p. 16).

The foregoing suggest that woman has both multiple abilities and a wide range of interests and attitudes. In support of that latter claim, the Journal also asserted that woman needed to "feel all the responsibility of her own freedom" (10: 144). And in 1909, the First Presidency claimed that, "All men and women are in the similitude of

the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity"--a most expansive definition (MFP 4: 203).

In 1921, E. E. Ericksen addressed the issue of "What Men Admire in Women"; and he claimed:

> No woman will long be admired by man if her life can be fully circumscribed, her limitations fixed, her possibilities stated. No; she must be forever revealing new interests, new possibilities, new powers. (YWJ 32: 139)

And more recent definitions explicitly recognize woman's intellectual potential: Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency consistently stresses the need for women to become well educated; while President Spencer W. Kimball once said that "good women" are "articulate" as well as "affectionate" (Beloved Sisters, p. 21).

A more fundamental change, however, is woman's evolution from a "cursed" to an acceptable human being. Early members of the Church, like members of many other sects, believed that while both Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, Eve was the weaker and the literal cause of Adam's fall. This disobedient act caused God to curse Eve and all her daughters with submission to their husbands. Mormon women are still expected to render that submission; but since the publication of the "Articles of Faith," few Church leaders blame that necessity on Eve.

Conventional Perceptions

In 1881, however, the Woman's Exponent noted that energetic women were "working for their redemption from

under the curse" (1 Mar. 1881; qtd. EII Mar. 1977, p. 1). And a decade later, Lula Greene Richards, the first Exponent Editor, addressed woman's "curse" in the then popular song titled "Woman, Rise!" The words were sung to the tune "House of Israel"; and the first line reads as follows: "First to fall 'mid Eden's bowers." The chorus, however, reflects the previously mentioned belief that the challenges of polygamy would remove Eve's curse from Mormon women: "Woman, 'rise! thy penance o'er,/ Sit thou in the dust no more./ Seize the scepter, hold the van,/ Equal with thy brother, man" (YWJ 4: 201).

Church President Brigham Young was not convinced that women had been freed from the curse by 1872, however. Instead, he claimed that there was a "curse" upon the females, and he could not "take it off." Young also asked his congregation if they could remove that curse; and he replied for them:

> No you can not--it never will be taken from the human family until the mission is fulfilled, and our Master and our Lord is perfectly satisfied with our work. . . . Well, ladies, just be reconciled to your condition. . . . (JD 15: 132-133)

Thus, during the nineteenth century, woman was authoritatively defined as more susceptible than man to temptation; so she needed his counsel and rule.

Woman also needed man's strength for her own protection. In 1902, the Young Woman's Journal admitted that, " . . . for some inscrutable purpose, in accordance with some law, kept or broken, the woman hath not retained

the degree of strength and perfection, physically, which belongs to man" (13: 286). The foregoing suggests a loss for woman which man somehow avoided; and other alleged weaknesses make woman appear not only inferior but dangerous to man.

In 1907, Susa Young Gates wrote, "One sinning girl in a neighborhood will do more damage than a dozen sinning boys" (YWJ 18: 401). A 1921 article titled "Women in the Courts" claimed that women have "less regard for the spirit of the oaths than men, and . . . they are more ready, if necessary, to commit perjury" (YWJ 32: 334-335). And the Relief Society Magazine in 1925 claimed that women were "much more apt to go to excess" in drinking and smoking than were men (25: 306).

According to Church publications, women had other unfortunate traits, as well. In 1907, Susa Gates deplored woman's inherent insincerity or "gushiness" (YWJ 18: 267); and three months later she admitted that girls "can no more help giggling and wiggling and screaming, . . . than they can help breathing" (YWJ 18: 399). Gates also concluded that these expressions were healthy and normal; but readers noticed that they were not typical of boys who apparently had more control.

Along those same lines, in 1916 the Journal described "The Girlish Girl" in part as follows: "Nothing troubles her for more than a passing moment. . . . A little thoughtless and frivolous she may be, . . . but

altogether lovable . . . a real girl" (27: 381). The Journal also suggested in this editorial that girls have a "studious" nature. However, in most other discourse girls were described as less scholarly than men because they were naturally more interested in other things.

In 1923, the Relief Society Magazine asserted that "men are less emotional and impulsive than women"; and in 1924 the Journal concluded that women were natural gossips (RSMag 10: 209; YWJ 35: 135). In 1948 the Improvement Era claimed that "nearly every girl is a little bit moody" (July 1948, p. 440). And a 1969 Improvement Era demonstrated in a list of nine "Things a Young Girl Loves" that teenage girls are essentially devoted to such superficial interests as clothes and toys (May, p. 49).

A belief in similar fixed traits still prevails. In 1970, the Era claimed that, "Men's ideas shift back to reality faster than do those of women. It may be because women are more idealistic than men" (May, p. 64). A year later, high-school-age Aaronic Priesthood boys read:

> There are emotional, spiritual, and mental differences between the sexes.
>
> Differences occur in special interests. Young men like physical activities and masculine things as they prepare themselves to assume their roles as husband and father and provider. They become protectors. They become leaders. Young ladies, by comparison, are feminine in nature. They do the things they like to do to prepare for the role of mother in the family. (Priests Series B, 1970, pp. 132-133)

And in 1973, members of the Teachers' Quorums read:

> Young women are usually more emotional than young men.

> Young women usually find it easier to accept advice from parents and other elders than do young men. They enjoy being protected. (Teachers Series B, 1973, p. 73)

Additional published statements concerning woman's alleged natural weaknesses and dependent needs can be cited endlessly. However, woman's so-called "natural" virtues have equally often determined her "natural" role.

Nonassertiveness is prized. In 1888, the Woman's Exponent addressed the "nature" question directly in an essay titled "What Constitutes A True Woman?" (1 July 1888, p. 21). Of ten items noted, "virtue," "purity," "friendship," "sympathy," "grace," "refinement" and "modesty" were common nineteenth century perceptions of the Victorian ideal. In addition, so-called good Christian women have typically been identified by some combination of passive and self-sacrificing behaviors; and typically men have not.

When speaking of Relief Society Sisters, Joseph Smith claimed that benevolence flowed "spontaneously" from their "humane and philanthropic bosoms" (DHC 4: 567). Brigham Young claimed that women were pious because they were "submissive" (JD 14: 120). Young also said that woman had a "finer nature" and "stronger moral inclinations" than had man (JD 18: 233). And President Joseph Fielding Smith claimed that women " . . . are always more willing to make sacrifices, and are the peers of men in stability, Godliness, morality and faith" (RSMag 43: 782).

In 1907, the Young Woman's Journal pursued a related notion when it observed that "The Womanly Woman" found joy "not in realizing herself, but in helping others to realize" (18: 211). And as late as 1964, a poem in the Magazine noted that men lacked "spirituality," and that is why "they need a mate" (51: 111). (In contrast, male Church leaders now assume that a man who is "magnifying his priesthood" has full access to "Christian" virtues.)

In 1890, the Young Woman's Journal claimed that woman was man's complement in other respects:

> Is he strong, forceful, stern, merciless, imperious, striding over all opposition? She is gentle, kind, loving, forgiving, full of mercy and charity. . . . So girls, don't be mannish; cultivate your womanhood. (1: 406-407)

A month later the same Journal found that the "Perfect Woman" was "amiable," "modest," "gentle," "kind," "loving," "polite," "sensitive" "slow to anger and quick to forgive" with a "temper as calm as a summer's sea"--quiet if not passive behaviors (452-454).

In 1907, the Journal also warned girls: "Avoid boldness! There is no one thing that is more praised in women than modesty" (18: 269). Two months later the same publication concluded that women possessed "inborn modesty" and "innate delicacy of soul" (375). And in 1916, Apostle George F. Richards wrote that Mormon women should "bear aloft the standard of modesty and purity which makes for true womanhood" (YWJ 27: 325).

As previously noted, David O. McKay was most idealistic in his perception of women. In 1948, he claimed, " . . . nearly all women are by nature sensitive and dainty"; and he concluded that while men enjoyed "the applause of public acclaim" their equally meritorious wives and mothers "remain smilingly content in unheralded achievement" (RSMag 35: 5). In addition, McKay often noted that a "beautiful, modest, gracious woman is creation's masterpiece" (RSMag 51: 884; IE Aug. 1965, p. 677 among others).

After McKay became President, perceptions of woman's "pure" and "sacrificial" nature pervaded the discourse. In addition to McKay's own definitions, Apostle Richard L. Evans consistently spoke of woman's selflessness. In 1965, Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., emphasized another popular belief when he observed that most women were "endowed with intuition." Then Critchlow repeated the the convention that God:

> . . . made man rugged, strong--the builder, provider, protector of the family living places. He made woman gentle, fair--the homemaker, lovemaker, peacemaker, endowed with heavenly graces. God made both to be happy in their respective places. (IE Dec. 1965, p. 1121)[1]

During this same period, Elder Sterling W. Sill reinforced the concept of woman's natural passivity: "Women were created with more physical beauty than men. They also have gentler dispositions. They are more loving and spiritual in their natures" (IE May 1969, p. 12). And in 1970, the Relief Society Magazine reminded its readers

that women were "naturally inclined toward tenderness and compassion" (57: 68).

It is interesting to note again that while the bulk of Church discourse defines woman as naturally possessing specific traits, additional prescriptions to manifest what should be naturally apparent reinstate the quality and reinforce convention. For example, in 1969, the Improvement Era explained "How to Teach About Women"; and one headline read, "Both sexes want women to be the personification of the delicate, beautiful, gentle, loving, and spiritual elements of life." "Pedagogical" implications read in part as follows:

> As a girl grows up, she finds it easier to think of herself as womanly if her experiences are feminine.
>
> Girls who can knit, crochet, sew, arrange flowers and furniture, and who dress in dainty things; girls who know the refining influence of good music and literature; girls who see the art of motherhood exhibited in their homes--these are the girls who have, in all probability, grown to feel feminine and therefore want to act and be treated as ladies. (May 1969, 43-44)

Much of the significance of the foregoing lies in the term "feminine." If a girl or woman was not feminine in 1969, she was termed "masculine" which meant that she was abnormal. In contrast, social scientists currently define a composite of traits which are known as "androgynous" forms. However, while some may promote androgyny as an attractive condition, a March 1983 "Church News" stated, " . . . the Lord made men and women to be different. There was no 'unisex' in His plans" (13 Mar.,

p. 16). Such traditional perceptions are also reflected in the book titled Woman--the most recent and authoritative Church publication to focus on questions of woman's nature and proper role.

In his Introduction to Woman, President Spencer W. Kimball talked about women's need to be "true to their feminine natures and magnify their opportunities for loving service." Kimball later asserted that good women "breathed service" to their husbands and children; they satisfy their interests for "light and knowledge in school, in personal study, and in Relief Society"; and they satisfy their need for personal development by teaching " . . . children at home, in Sunday School, and in Primary; as they teach in the Relief Society; as they participate in sacrament meetings; and in their daily conversation." Finally, the President claimed that a woman could develop leadership skills best by guiding "children toward perfection" and by counseling "with her husband" (2-3).

As summation for the orthodox position, one might consider Apostle Ezra Taft Benson's essay titled, "To the Elect Women of the Kingdom of God." In that piece, Benson concluded, "God gave woman a different personality and temperament than man. By nature woman is charitable and benevolent, man is striving and competitive" (Woman, p. 72). Benson also said:

> You were not created to be the same as men. Your natural attributes, affections, and personalities are

> entirely different from those of a man. They consist of faithfulness, benevolence, kindness, and charity . . .

According to Benson, such characteristics "balance" the more "aggressive and competitive nature of a man."

For Benson, as for Kimball and other Church leaders, the "complementary" and mild-mannered nature just cited entails woman's role. Benson observed that God "elected" women to be wives and mothers before the creation of the earth. And he concluded that women should not enter commercial employment because "by competing," woman's "godly attributes are diminished and they acquire the sameness with man" (Woman, pp. 70-71).

Thus the "natural woman" in Mormon societies must still meet traditional expectations characterized by the charitable, self-sacrificing, and other nonassertive virtues. Woman is also naturally "maternal." These traits combine to justify the Mormon Sisters' domestic service; while deviation still identifies an unnatural condition. Predictably, discourse disdains such offenses. On the other hand, the Mormon woman has also been discredited for "inherent" unattractive traits; and these negative evaluations merit study.

Woman Appears Less Highly Valued Than Man

During the last decade, the Church has been criticized by some for the nature of much of its involvement in the International Women's Year, for

opposition to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment and for other stances regarding women. At the same time, Church leaders have spent increasing efforts to explain official attitudes and policies. The Sisters have been featured in unprecedented special conferences, firesides, memorials, programs and presentations; and discourse from such events provides recent, authoritative contributions to the Mormon woman's image.

The 15 September 1979 "Church News" was devoted to the Sisters; and one article defined "the basic" question as follows: "Is the inborn spirit, somewhat different for men and women, equally valued, and does it have equal room and opportunity for growth and expansion?" The writer answered "yes," but added:

> We need to understand and teach that the man's usual role is simply more visible than the woman's. It is more easily defined and more often addressed in the scriptures, but it is not more important, and does not carry more divine approbation than a woman's role. (16)

This study is not prepared to discuss the reality of "divine approbation." However, evidence suggests that neither <u>woman</u> nor her roles are valued as highly as <u>man</u> and his roles in Mormon discourse; and that claim can be addressed.

Much of the information presented in chapters three through six supports the statement that woman's roles are not as highly esteemed as are the man's. In considering woman's ecclesiastical image, the nearly synonymous usage of "Church leadership" and "priesthood"

with "Mormon Church" reflects some of her lower status. The growth of priesthood authority and the loss of woman's office have also reduced woman's image. Activities of the priesthood quorums, the men's auxiliary programs and individual priesthood members are reported more often than women's activities. Women missionaries are essentially ignored. In addition, authoritative discourse constantly exhorts women to support men in their church callings while relatively little discourse advises men to support women's efforts--suggesting that man's church work is more important than the woman's.

It is also useful to note that home teachers and missionaries may not teach the gospel in homes where the father objects: home teachers are to watch over members, but not <u>teach</u> the families as "this is the father's duty" (MPPSG 1976-1977, p. 103). Such a stance is provocative, given the Mormon claim that Church membership and activity are necessary in order to inherit the highest kingdom in the eternities. In addition, during an extended period of Church history a woman could not receive her own endowment if her husband did not have his (MFP 5: 111). Husbands are also typically asked to approve their wives' church callings--often before the woman is aware of the assignment. In these and other ways, the man both figuratively and literally comes before the woman within the Church--all suggesting that he and his roles are most important.

When considering woman's secular image, chapter five of this study indicated that contemporary Mormon women are essentially ignored or reproved in their activities outside of home and church. Much attention is paid to women who reject or abandon careers for marriage; and those who are recognized for public achievement are usually described as being primarily "true wives." A typical example is found in a 1957 address by Harold B. Lee. According to the "Church News," Apostle Lee praised Susa Young Gates, Vilate M. Kimball, Emily S. Richards, Martha Horne Tingey, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, and Zina D. H. Young for the "heroic deeds in their lives." These women were writers, suffragists, or active in national and international councils of women as well as being noted leaders of Mormon women. Yet Lee concluded that, "Most outstanding in their lives was that they had successful husbands. They were happy with their husbands and happy with their children" (ChNews 11 May 1957, p. 4). In contrast, one seldom reads that the "most outstanding" aspect of some important man's life is that he had a successful wife, or even a good wife, and enjoyed his family.

Women also appear secondary to men in intimate relationships. They are told not to compete against men but to groom and behave so as to support male egos. These "courtship" maneuvers carry over into marriage to the point that wives are advised to style their hair to please

their husbands, always look clean and attractive in his presence, cook his favorite dishes, and keep his house as he likes it. In contrast to such on-going efforts, men are typically encouraged to treat women to dates and occasional gifts; but theirs is not a constant ingratiation role. Instead, ten times the amount of discourse instructs women in the art of pleasing men as the reverse; and one implication is that if the man is not more loved or respected, he is at least more powerful.

Certainly the man is not expected to make the woman the center of his life, as she is expected to do for him. Both Daniel H. Wells and James Paramore told women that man's affections should not be centered in her, but hers should be in him. In addition, in 1917 the Young Woman's Journal criticized the woman who wanted the "opportunities" and "freedom" of man; and readers learned that they should be "content to be the unseen oil that feeds the glittering flame. . ." (28: 230).

In 1929, the Journal praised Jane Welsh Carlyle as "A True Wife" who forsook wealth and society for poverty and loneliness with her husband, Thomas. Not only were the two isolated at Craiggenputtoch, but solitude was so necessary to the writer that, "Mrs. Carlyle too learned to live and do her work in silence beside him, although she was not of a silent nature. Had she been less brave . . . he could not have accomplished his great task" (40: 430-431). And forty years later, Lillian Bradshaw told

Magazine readers the following slogan: "Nothing before thee, my husband, not even me!" (57: 727).

A 1971-1972 Family Home Evening Manual displayed that same ranking in a more indirect argument. The Manual provided "Self-Evaluation" quizzes for "Fathers" and "Mothers" in which the man was challenged to criticize his performance in seven areas: living the gospel, teaching children the gospel, taking time for children; telling children moral stories; blessing family members in time of need; being willing to listen to his wife; and showing "respect and courtesy" to his wife so the children would do the same. The woman was challenged in six areas: teaching children to go to their father for counsel and blessings; showing "respect and honor" to his position as head of the family; going to her husband for blessings and counsel; never complaining about her husband before the children; talking with her husband about her concerns; and being willing to listen to her husband (FHEM 1971-72, p. 47).

In the foregoing, all six of the woman's challenges focused in whole or in part on her relationship with her husband including her obligation to defend and sustain him. In contrast, only two of the man's challenges focused on his relationship with his wife--to whom he was to give "courtesy" while she was to return "honor." In addition, he had one challenge in which he was independent of all familial relationships. As noted in the section of

this study concerning priesthood in the home, Mormon discourse typically foregrounds the man and assigns him greater deference. However, implied greater competence may be a related factor.

Woman Appears Less Competent Than Man

Much evidence to support that claim has already been presented: The Sisters have lost responsibility and options previously held; and nothing has replaced such loss. They have not only lost sanctioned, public practice of the gifts of the spirit, they have also lost memory of the possibility. They have lost office and authority within the Church while men have gained the same. The early Relief Society selected its own officers and all three of the women's early auxiliaries called their own teachers, set their goals, created their projects and services, established their courses of study, wrote their lessons, published their magazines, generated their own funds, and functioned rather autonomously within the Church. The early Utah Relief Society was staffed by officers whose titles suggested both ecclesiastical and secular high status and accompanying skills.

In contrast, all publicized administrations for healing the sick and personal blessings are now performed by Melchizedek priesthood holders. All personnel assignments, goals, policies, courses of study, and lessons now fall under priesthood correlation and supervision. In addition, the women have neither

magazines, materials for commerce, nor funds of their own.[2] At the same time, the priesthood quorums have added programs, offices and responsibilities including supervision of the women's auxiliaries.

In addition to her ecclesiastical losses, the contemporary Mormon woman has fewer approved roles outside her home. Nineteenth century Sisters were explicitly asked to secure work as they were able, while early twentieth century women encouraged each other to participate in paraprofessional social work or extensive community service. Dual or serial careers were often promoted in the Journal; and the Magazine occasionally encouraged women to develop cottage industries. Currently, however, women are discouraged from pursuing careers and from extensive community service if their children, of all ages, are at home. Women thus have fewer approved avenues for expressing or developing themselves, and their range of skills appears more narrow.

Women have also lost total practical responsibility (and status) for raising their families and maintaining their homes. In August of 1983, the "Church News" told men not to leave parenting to mothers alone: "Fathers are the priesthood holders. They are to preside in the home in righteousness. Can this be done by remote control?" That article also released women from decades of exclusive influence: "With his wife . . . he will set the tone of the home, the atmosphere, the general attitudes."

And the writer concluded, "It is the father's responsibility, aided by the mother," to bring about those proper conditions in the home (14 Aug., p. 16).

In contrast, for decades authoritative discourse has claimed that woman's domestic role was so important and demanding that she must be "on the watchtower" in her home "24 hours a day" (ChNews 7 Oct. 1967, p. 21). Her domestic image overflowed with sacrifice, love, unending labor and influence; and her capabilities and responsibilities appeared enormous. This study is not designed to assess all the consequences of man's increased domestic efforts, although most current research suggests that shared homemaking can have positive results. On the other hand, it is possible to assess the dimensions of both male and female images in Mormon discourse. Woman's most honored role is currently reduced. At the same time, she does not have new options--new aspects of her image. But he does.

In summary, the contemporary Mormon woman appears to be less capable than the man. Authoritative discourse defines him as "aggressive," "competitive" and capable of managing a variety of social interactions. At the same time, he can also be "kind," "loving," and "charitable" in his priesthood service and a "protective" president and provider in his home. Certainly he carries the powers of God which she does not. Woman is weaker than man--intelligent, talented and a selfless nurturer but also

"dependent" on his counsel and protection. These perceptions hold for domestic, secular and Church considerations.

In addition, woman is warned against trying to change her nature, entering "his" sphere, or developing skills that would compete with man's. It follows that because he has more capabilities and more authority, he can function in a larger number of settings. His sphere is broader. His "stewardship comprehends hers." And "common sense" suggests he is more valuable.

Women Appear More Harshly Criticized

Contemporary Church leaders do not label troublesome women "poor snoops" as Heber Kimball did a century ago (JD 5: 29). However, with the exception of consistently negative descriptions of bachelors over twenty-five, this study has already discussed several situations in which women have been criticized more sharply than men for errors that must be committed together: Women are berated as "temptresses"; but males are not publically accused of tempting females out of their virtue. In addition, women as a group were faulted for resisting polygamy; but the corpus of materials surveyed did not produce similar consistent criticism for men. Instead, most other discourse concerning polygamy was addressed generally--to the "Church," "this people," the "members," the "Saints," and similar inclusive terms.

Women have also been blamed as a group for practicing birth control. They have been defined as "lazy," "selfish," and "unnatural" for not wanting many children even though such decisions must have involved the men. On the other hand, the materials surveyed disclosed no such consistent labeling of Mormon men. Considerable discourse was addressed to "the Church" at large; but men were not typically noted as a specific recalcitrant body.

These discriminatory postures have been common for several thousand years. The Old Testament condoned a double standard in which married men might lie with harlots while adulterous married women would be stoned. In addition, the early Christian fathers faulted Eve more than Adam for their banishment; and so have Mormon leaders. As noted earlier, Brigham Young and the nineteenth century Saints recognized Eve's special "curse." However, as late as 1911, and with full access to a different interpretation found in The Pearl of Great Price, Willard Done told Journal readers, " . . . all of the trouble and pain and sorrow of the world had its origin in the transgression of a woman" (22: 124). Many others have taken a similar stance.

Finally, Church discourse suggests that women were plaintiffs in more divorces in the nineteenth century than were men. And secular studies of contemporary divorces indicate that men are at least as much at fault as women for failed marriage. In apparent disregard of those

conditions, however, when President Spencer W. Kimball addressed the problem of weak families in 1975, he advised the Sisters to "forget their pettiness and selfishness and submit themselves to their own righteous husbands" so the divorce rate would reduce (Ensign May 1975, p. 7). The President also advised men to "come home to their families"; but they were not defined in depreciative terms.

Thus Mormon women appear to be chastised more often than the men for joint errors, and criticized more harshly. The man's image appears to be protected more carefully than the woman's, and it is more attractive. As a result, in authoritative Mormon discourse the man again appears more valuable than the woman.

Women Seem More Often Belittled

Mormon women also appear less valuable than men because women as a class have more often been the brunt of sexist jokes in Mormon publications. Admittedly, the early women's journals infrequently used such terms as "egotistical," "conceited," and "selfish" to describe "some men" and the "lords of creation." The women occasionally defined themselves as "smarter" and "more clever" than the "sterner sex"; and some explicit digs were printed.

In addition, the early Improvement Era, then essentially the organ of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, also reported women's perceived

faults in confrontive terms and derided the "weaker sex." It is important, however, to recognize that women didn't joke about or belittle men in the general Church publications. But women were treated with disrespect in those magazines, and woman's image therefore suffered the greater damage.

After 1929, the Improvement Era absorbed the Young Woman's Journal, and was later identified as the "Voice of the Church." Each month this general publication printed a single page of letters, jokes, proverbs, recognitions, anecdotes and other miscellany; and frequently the jokes on these pages criticized woman as a group for being bossy, talkative, perverse, meddlesome, stupid and vain. They were poor cooks, harassing mothers-in-law, and bad drivers among other female failings. The following are samples of the material that appeared after World War II.

Woman's inferior intelligence was a constant source of amusement. The June 1965 Era tells about a woman who asked her husband if "Voliv" was considered a good writer. The man retrieved the book from his wife and read "Vol. iv" on the spine (744). In 1969, "End of an Era" contained two items from this "stupid" category on the same page. One concerned woman's poor taste in men's ties; and in the other, "Mother" tells Junior not to use bad words. "But Mother, Shakespeare uses them," he declared. "Well, then," she replied, "don't play with him any more!" (June, p. 140).

In 1970, an impatient man outside a phone booth asks, "Can I help you find the number you want? Young woman (sweetly): Oh, I don't want a number. I'm looking for a pretty name for my baby" (Dec., p. 144). Women drivers were consistently criticized for their lack of intelligence: A man narrowly missed a collision when the other driver turned without notice. "For Pete's sake, lady, why didn't you signal" "Don't be ridiculous," came the indignant reply. "I always turn at this corner" (July 1970, p. 79).

Woman's perceived quarrelsomeness was also derided. In 1948 a physician asked his "handsome, rosy-cheeked old gentleman" patient how he achieved his robust state. The "old chap" admitted that he and Mary agreed "When I lost my temper, she was to keep quiet. And I promised that when she was in a bad humor, I'd leave the house. And, Doc, I've enjoyed a fine outdoor life for sixty years" (June, p. 352). In 1970, a priesthood instructor asked why there were two sexes in the human family; and the elders' quorum president responded immediately, "So there'll be opposition in all things" (Jan. p. 66).

As related traits, women were also defined as meddlesome and bossy: "By the time he whispers, 'We were made for each other,' she's already planning alterations" (Apr. 1960, p. 288). Bossiness is found in the "nagging wife" who says: "Wake up! You're talking in your sleep!

Husband: My goodness, do you begrudge me those few words?" (Feb. 1970, p. 96). It is also noted in the observation: "There are more than 1,000 women in the United States who have taken up the law. There are several million other women who lay it down" (Jan. 1960, p. 64).

The Era also defined women as long-winded: "A child who answered the telephone's ring was asked by the caller if her mother were home. 'I don't see her right now,' was the reply, 'but I know she's here because the phone is still warm" (May 1965, n. pag.). And women were criticized for their failure as cooks: "There's nothing like a good, old-fashioned, home-cooked meal--not in most homes at least" (Apr. 1960, p. 288).

Women were apparently perverse: "The easiest way to change a woman's mind is to agree with her" (June 1948, p. 352). Women were dependent on men: "Two spinsters were discussing men. 'Which would you desire most in a husband--brains, wealth, or appearance?' asked one. 'Appearance,' said the other, 'and the sooner the better'" (Dec. 1970, p. 144). And the question of dominance appeared: "'Tell me,' the social chairman of the ladies' group asked the speaker, 'do you believe in clubs for women?' 'Only,' he responded, 'if kindness fails'" (May 1970, p. 73).

Thus the Improvement Era had fun at women's expense. Many American magazines did the same. And if the jokes are not good examples of their genre, they are

representative of the Era's final page. On the other hand, no jokes were found in the materials surveyed belittling men as a group. There were "hick farmer" items which seemed an occupational failing rather than a gender weakness. And the Era poked fun at Blacks, Scotsmen and other distinctive groups. However, while the potential for criticizing men should have been equal, male faults were largely ignored. This uneven criticism suggests discrepant evaluations of the sexes; and civil rights rulings have confirmed the damage that derisive humor does to a population's image.

Visibility Is a Test of Value

As previously noted, a 1979 issue of the "Church News" suggested that Mormons recognize and even teach the fact that women are simply less visible than men in their roles, but equally valued. On the other hand, journalists and social scientists agree that "news makers" have traditionally been leaders or deviants; leaders and deviants send and receive the most messages; and discourse responds to what is perceived as important. Given that second set of opinions, it may be useful to reconsider the Mormon woman's visibility as a measure of her value.

Although the New Era and Ensign have gradually increased their coverage of women over the last fourteen years, the Sisters are still not featured as often as the men in those magazines. The earlier, general magazines and journals of the Church--the Journal of Discourses, the

Millennial Star, and the Improvement Era--infrequently considered the Sisters; and until recently, the "Church News" was noticeably indifferent. For example, from July to December in 1923, the "News" featured men eleven times as often as women, not including a routine recognition of missionaries.

In 1948, the Improvement Era consigned an unusually large number of pages to the Relief Society's building project. Even so, the magazine devoted nearly three times as many pages to the adult priesthood that year. In 1952, the yearly index for the Era listed nearly a column and a half of articles devoted to the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. In contrast, one eighth of a column contained all the articles related to the young women's auxiliary; and the index listed nothing for "Relief Society."

Such discrepant coverage can be explained in part by the fact that, except for yearly lesson manuals, neither priesthood quorum had an independent publication at that time. On the other hand, the young women's auxiliary had no publication, either; and was supposed to be represented, with the Aaronic Priesthood and young men's auxiliary, by the Improvement Era. A second explanation is found in the observation that the general Church publications often report Church growth, changes in leadership, large meetings and conferences, building and other projects in feature articles. And because men fill

all of the high-level administrative positions and supervise most projects, they naturally receive greater attention.

This structural "necessity," however, also creates the impression that the "Church" is comprised of male leaders. Most non-Mormon newspapers and formal histories have been written with a similar focus and have produced the same effect. In addition, for several years following World War II, the Era printed "A Day to Day Chronology of Church Events" also titled "The Church Moves On." This lengthy account explicitly equated male leadership with "Church activity," although women were mentioned infrequently.

In 1965, an Improvement Era continuing feature titled "The Era of Youth" considered topics of interest to teenage boys and girls. Male interests and men's activities outnumbered those for young women by more than two to one. In addition, each issue contained a "Presiding Bishopric's Page" which featured two young Mormon men. There was no comparable page for the girls. Later, a new Improvement Era feature titled "The L.D.S. Scene" reported the achievements of members in both Church and secular activities; but fewer than fifteen percent of the "scene makers" were female. During the same period, "The Church Moves On" provided columns of space for the men's athletic tournaments with nothing comparable for women's athletics or other "female" interests.

The weekly "Church News" still features men more often than women. Beginning with January of 1980, twenty-five percent of all "Church News" issues were reviewed in revolving sequence to February of 1984;[3] and the following was found: Men were featured ten times as often as women in the center, double page section. Men were also the subject of most other articles. In the continuing series titled "Profiles from the Past," men were featured four times as often as women.

The "News" frequently honors individuals for a number of interests and activities including their vocations, avocations, hobbies, athletic achievements, and efforts as students. From 1980 to 1984, men were recognized three times as often as women in such articles. In a feature on physical fitness, women were included in only two of six pictures (ChNews 12 Jan. 1980, pp. 6-8). An issue devoted entirely to teaching in the Church featured eight male teachers in comparison to four females. Men were shown teaching women five times, but women were not shown teaching men; while the cover shows a man teaching a class of both sexes (26 June 1983, pp. 1-16).

In that same period, men were featured fifteen times as often as women for their Church appointments. Men were also featured in "News" photos twice as often as women; and this figure misrepresents the true focus. Women were often included in "group" pictures of meetings,

conferences and family gatherings or as the "wife of" a featured man. In contrast, men were usually pictured in the "Church News" for their own efforts.

A "Special 150th Anniversary Edition" of the "Church News" printed a year by year chronology "of the Church" and "of the world" in January of 1980 (ChNews Jan. 1980, pp. 16-20). And in the first one hundred years of listings, only four percent of all news worthy items concerning the Church were directly and exclusively related to the Sisters. Many were directly and exclusively related to the brethren. In addition, several listings noted events which had no church-wide impact but appeared to be filler materials or curiosities; thus space was apparently available to include more reports concerning women. It is also important to note that the selection for the list was made in 1980 when the "News" might have been more responsive to women's issues.

In addition to the foregoing discrepancies in content, differences in the form of reporting men's and women's activities also exist and are less easily explained. For example, the December 1956 Improvement Era reported the Sisters' three-day, semiannual Relief Society conference with two lines, while eight lines noted the men's Saturday night, semiannual priesthood meeting (886). Such ratios were common in both the monthly chronologies and in individual articles. One might explain this inequity by noting that the Era was the general

publication for adult readers, while the Relief Society had its own Magazine. That conclusion, however, would be based on an assumption that men were indifferent to the Sisters' interests. In addition, the Magazine faithfully reported major Church events and produced many feature articles on individual Mormon men as well as Mormon women.

Other differences in the form of reporting can also be cited. For example, until recently men appointed to serve as mission presidents were always fully named, and often recognized for their business affiliations or achievements. At first, few if any wives of these presidents were named although such women spend hours daily in mission-related work. Later, wives were routinely named; but they were identified only as "Sister" or "Mrs." (Surname). In the July 1960 Era, Elder J. Leonard Love is commended for his appointment as President of the Northern California Mission. Seventeen lines of biographical detail follow for President Love; and the notice concludes that "Mrs. Love (a sister of Elder Rulon J Sperry)" will accompany her husband (488). Thus, "Mrs. Love" has no dignifying first name but is known only by her relationship to men. In contrast, the women's publications prior to World War II typically identified women by their own Christian name, their maiden name, and then their married name--thus reinforcing their separate identity.

The foregoing supports the claim that women are less visible than men in authoritative Mormon discourse.

Women are less visible than men in the discourse of most cultures. However, the assertion that women are equally valued does not follow. Instead, a more easily defended interpretation is: women are less visible than men in public discourse because they and their activities are less significant within a male-dominated culture.

Theoretically, women have equal potential for recognition. Women currently constitute sixty-seven percent of all convert baptisms and outnumber men in Church membership. Women lead and staff the Relief Society and the Young Woman's Mutual Improvement Association. They lead and essentially staff the Primary Association. They staff a large proportion of Sunday School positions. They lead choirs, sing in choirs, serve in libraries and other clerical positions. They do genealogical research and ordinance work in Mormon temples. For decades, they did most of the social services work in the Church. They have given most of the compassionate service in the Church. They have provided a large percentage of the effort for most special programs. In fact, in an unusual tribute President Heber J. Grant once said, "Without the wonderful work of the women I realize that the Church would have been a failure" (Gospel Standards, p. 150). Outside of the activities noted, women also lead full lives in their homes and perhaps the community as well.

Given the foregoing potential for reporting, one might ask, "The women are less visible to whom?" The

answer, as suggested earlier, is built on several assumptions. (1) Discourse responds to what is perceived as "important." (2) Discourse creates the "culture" of a society--the complex interweaving of shared "facts," "values," and "policies" which not only reflects experience but which also becomes a lens for viewing subsequent events. (3) If the culture, or lens, doesn't identify women as "important," they are neither "seen" as often nor valued as highly as men. (4) A self-reinforcing cycle can develop. As a simple example of the foregoing, in 1930 the Improvement Era explained "Who's Who in the Church" in twenty-six biographical sketches of some general authorities--all males (May, pp. 462-464).

With the exception of their own magazines, women have been consistently under represented in Mormon publications. In fact, the Improvement Era after World War II decreased its focus on women at the same time that it decreased the number of women in editorial positions. However, from 1970 to the present, women have gradually gained attention in both the Ensign and the New Era. Women are still not equally represented with the men, however; and their increased visibility correlates with increased criticism of Church policies concerning women.

The Orthodoxy of the Woman's Image

This study has suggested that approved aspects of the Mormon woman's image essentially consist of the Old Testament ideals: she should be pure, pious, submissive

and domestic. In addition, Church leaders also insist that the Mormon woman is "intelligent" and "capable." Those traits which have received the greatest attention, or been most influential in determining woman's role, however, are her "benevolence," "dependency" and the ability to bear children. Repeated definitions over the history of the church display but few variations.

Consistency alone, however, does not maintain an image. Woman must not only be defined, but be defined correctly. In Mormon discourse, the "orthodoxy" of the woman's image has been achieved by establishing God as author, limiting the number of members who can interpret God's will for the Church, publicizing authoritative interpretations, and limiting the "publication" of nonauthoritative and variant perceptions.

The Rhetoric of Monopoly

According to Mormon belief, God created woman to support others through nurturant behavior in a domestic setting. This information is essentially located in scriptures which were all recorded by male prophets, both ancient and modern. In addition, both the scriptures and God's current mind are continuously reinterpreted by those General Authorities of the Church who are prophets, seers and revelators for the Church. On more local levels, the orthodoxy is explained to Church members, in public and in private, by stake presidents, mission presidents, branch presidents and bishops. Thus Church doctrine has become a

repository of select male interpretations; and credibility is partly a matter of gender.

Not only do the male General Authorities and other high-ranking men have the greatest credibility, they also have greatest access to Church audiences. As a result, men's definitions are widely known; and men's images of women have typically prevailed. Men dominate the semiannual General Conferences of the Church to the extent that only twice during the twentieth century have women spoken in those meetings. Men "preside" over all general "adult" church meetings. Men speak most often in stake and mission conferences, and men are heard most often in the weekly sacrament meetings. In addition, men have dominated the general Church publications.

Until 1872, Mormon women had no publication in which they routinely defined either their own image or that of man. In addition, from 1872 until 1929 women did not write significantly in any publication that was read by the general membership of the Church. However, once women had assigned access to the Improvement Era, the composition of that magazine changed noticeably, if briefly. Coverage of women's interests and activities was greatly increased; and a large number of women published general-interest articles, fiction and poetry.

These numbers declined gradually through the 1930s, and rapidly following World War II. From 1929 to 1950 two women served as associate editor and associate

manager of the Improvement Era. From 1950 to 1965, however, there was no woman associate editor, but only one woman who was moved from that position to "associate managing editor." After 1965, there was no woman in any Era-wide editorial post, but only one "associate business manager" of the seven editorial and managerial positions available (IE Dec. 1970, p. 129).

Admittedly, for many decades the Sisters held their own large conferences and produced their own magazines. As noted earlier, the Woman's Exponent was launched in 1872; and two women's journals were published between 1889 and 1929. In addition, the Relief Society Magazine was published until 1970. Thus women's definitions were accessible within the women's discourse. Later, however, men's definitions began to prevail within the twentieth-century women's publications. The nineteenth century Woman's Exponent was edited, printed and largely written by women with no man serving on an editorial board or acting in an official advisory capacity. Most of the articles were written by women, although men's discourse was occasionally quoted.

The Young Woman's Journal, begun in 1889, was edited and largely written by women with invited essays from prominent Mormon men. By 1905, however, between 20 and 25 percent of the large feature articles listed in the table of contents were written by men; by 1911, 35 percent; and by 1918, 40 percent. This number dropped to

30 percent in 1924; and the Young Woman's Journal ceased publication in 1929 still largely written by Mormon women.

In contrast, the Relief Society Magazine was ultimately furnished with "priesthood advisors," though such men were not listed as "editors." At first, women wrote all of the lessons, most of the large feature articles and some doctrinal discussions. By 1920, 10 percent of the large essays listed in the table of contents were written by men. By 1934, 20 percent; by 1942, 30 percent; and by 1952, 33 percent of the articles and 60 percent of the lessons were written by men. In 1956, 33 percent of the articles and 75 percent of the lessons were written by men. Women wrote only the "homemaking" lesson and the visiting teachers' "message." These numbers varied only slightly until the final issue in 1970, although women returned as authors of the "social relations" lessons.

Currently Mormon women have neither large conferences which they design and over which they preside nor journals of their own. They do serve in editorial and managerial positions on the Ensign and New Era magazines; and they write for both publications in addition to writing for the "Church News."[4] Women do not hold the top editorial or managerial posts, however; and they typically write different kinds of articles and shorter articles than the men. Women contribute a large number of "personal stories," "soft news" articles, some history and

information concerning homemaking and domestic concerns. Men write most of the doctrinal essays, as well as most of the articles. It is important to note, however, that women publish more often in the general magazines than ever before. In 1973, women contributed roughly 25 percent of the Ensign articles (not including the extensive conferences addresses). But in 1983, the Sisters contributed 40 percent of such writing.

Outside of the Church periodicals, women have published but little. Women's books do not interpret basic doctrine, and women have published few scholarly studies. In addition, women's personal journals have been neglected. This situation is changing rapidly, however. Since 1970, the entire area of the Mormon woman's experience has been explored by increasing numbers of Church members and non-Mormon writers. On the other hand, one might safely conclude that for most of its history, women have contributed relatively few of their own perceptions to "general" Church discourse. As in most other cultures, Mormon women have traditionally spoken only to women and children.

For the purposes of this study, one important correlate of these patterns is the expansion and contraction of woman's image. The Sisters typically defined their world in a more pluralistic manner than did the men; and woman's image was more complex from 1872 to the mid-1930s than it has been ever since. It constricted

to the same degree that men encroached on the women's publications and women lost space in the general magazines. And it has increased slightly since women's perceptions have appeared in greater quantities in the new Church periodicals.

A second consideration is the correlation between publication and "history." As previously noted, women did not edit or publish a journal before 1872; and they have also lost aspects of their earlier "image": George A. Smith wrote a variant version of the Nauvoo Relief Society "Minutes," and subsequent historians and Church leaders have based their statements on Smith's revisions. Few were aware of the change; and both the original holograph and Gates' typescript are now in a locked vault inaccessible to scholars.[5]

In addition, because women had no publication in which to record their administrations to the sick, their blessings or prophecies, this aspect of their experience was not formally publicized during the period of peak practice. After 1872, the women's journals infrequently printed these experiences; but woman's ecclesiastical image was not reflected in full strength by the Sisters' published discourse. Later, as women's practice of the gifts of the spirit was gradually curtailed, little record of the practice was available. Instead, the men's discourse--which constituted the general discourse--noted an evolution in practice instead of variant

interpretations. Thus most Church members, perhaps even most male Church leaders, had no authoritative "woman's standard" against which to measure or question the difference.

In addition, as noted in chapter four of this study, certain terms related to power, once generally employed, have been authoritatively simplified to refer exclusively to male activities. The Nauvoo Relief Society "Minutes" and the Woman's Exponent recorded women's "ordination" on a number of occasions; but these events were not typically recorded in the general Church publications. Later, the word "ordain" was reserved by repeated authoritative and widely published usage to indicate an induction into priesthood office. And loss of the word correlates with woman's loss of authority.

A similar example is found with the words "administer" and "administration." Joseph Smith told the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo that the faithful Sisters had the right to administer to the sick. Heber C. Kimball said women who were one with their husband might administer through their husband's authority, and President John Taylor and Angus M. Cannon concurred. Brigham Young said that mothers had authority to administer to their children and need not send for the elders. Even the Deseret News said any faithful member of the Church could administer to the sick, without claiming special authority; and the Woman's Exponent and Young

Woman's Journal discussed women's administrations as acts of special authority.

In contrast, after the turn of the century male discourse limited the use of both terms to refer to priesthood ordinances. Women's efforts became "ministrations" and finally the term and the act became exclusive property of priesthood bearers. In this case, the men's use of "administer" and "administration" to refer to women's practice can be located in general published discourse. The instances are relatively few, however; and both term and act are now lost to the Sisters.

Another example of revised usage is found in the history of the significant term "priesthood." Most ancient prophets and the early Mormon leaders restricted their use of "priesthood" to indicate authority to act for God. When this usage prevailed, the authorized person was not entailed by the term, itself; and both "priests" and "priestesses" were possibilities. Gradually, however, the term "priesthood" was used to indicate priests, or specifically, the ordained Mormon man. The change, of course, is critical. Some Mormon women were termed "priestesses" in the nineteenth century. Some were called "prophetesses," "deaconesses," "merchantresses," and "appraisers." However, all of those terms were either privately recorded or essentially located in a few issues

of the women's publications. They are no longer used, and both office and authority are also lost.

Mitigating Factors

At least four major factors correlate with the more pluralistic versions of woman's image occasionally found in authoritative Mormon discourse: economic necessity, the presence of women's perceptions in published discourse, criticism of the Church from without, and the changing composition of Church membership. As previously noted, nineteenth century Mormon women were unable to confine their efforts to their personal domestic sphere. Unlike the ideal, middle-class American woman, most early Sisters provided or supplemented the family income in some fashion; and the Church later needed woman's labor to counteract Gentile encroachment. Thus economic necessity expanded woman's sphere into commercial realms.

In addition, when churchwomen had their own large conferences and publications, a more pluralistic perception of women was accessible--at least to the Sisters. It is also important to note that until well into the twentieth century, the women's auxiliaries were defined in women's discourse as relatively strong and independent organizations; and prominent churchwomen appeared authoritative. As a result, the women's auxiliary leaders and articles in the women's publications might also have been perceived as credible; and their sometimes

deviant definitions could be reasonably entertained. Later, the Sisters and their varying perceptions appeared in the Improvement Era. In addition, for a few years after World War I, male writers in the Era and the Young Women's Journal expanded their own definitions of women--perhaps in response to the Sisters and perhaps to the new American woman who captured national attention.

Following World War II, however, fewer women influenced the Era; while more men influenced the Magazine. The Magazine reduced woman's image in lessons, features, and doctrinal discussions. At one point, even the soft news feature titled "Woman's Sphere" ignored woman's secular achievements and concentrated on the Sisters' birthdays. During this same period, much American discourse advanced similar, constricted definitions of women; and the two cultures reinforced each other.

On the other hand, significant changes have occurred in Church discourse when American or world culture has conflicted with Mormon culture and the Church has needed to appease its critics for either political or proselyting purposes. The isolated Utah pioneers were relatively indifferent to outside complaints until the number of Gentiles increased after the Civil War and federal pressure threatened to destroy the Church. The Church subsequently tried to promote its "American" and acceptable ways until well past the turn of the century. According to a 1980 "Church News," the Mormons were

negatively portrayed in the media until the 1930's and never acquired a truly positive image until the 1950's (5 Jan., pp. 22; 28). In addition, for several decades surrounding the turn of the century, woman's experience in the Church was of general "outside" concern; and woman's image within the Church was strongest at this time.

Following World War II, the Church's image grew increasingly positive in the national media; and woman's image was constricted in authoritative discourse. During the early postwar years, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson was Secretary of Agriculture, the Mormon Welfare Plan was admired, and Mormon industry and growth attracted much favorable recognition. Although the Church opposed the use of liquor and tobacco, most Mormon values seemed to support American values until the proposed Equal Rights Amendment again called national attention to Mormon women. Church influence in the International Woman's Year Conferences also drew rebuke. In 1978, Marilyn Warenski's Patriarchs and Politics: the Plight of the Mormon Woman drew additional negative attention to the Church. Sonia Johnson's excommunication in 1980 was widely publicized. And subsequent critical journalism has contributed a somewhat negative aspect to the Church's image.[6]

Finally, the composition of the Church, itself, has changed. For most of its history, Mormonism was essentially an American religion; and the Church attempted to display the lifestyle of the American middle class. At

the present time, however, more members speak Spanish than English; the Church is proselyting most effectively in the Third World countries and Japan; and Church members scattered throughout the world display a wide range of interests and life styles.

As a correlate of all the foregoing, the contemporary Mormon woman receives increased visibility and professed respect: Special women's conferences and "history" programs have been initiated. Women's commemorative gardens, statuary, and displays have been created. Women's "issues" are specifically addressed. Women are placed prominently in general church meetings and conferences. And, just as the Sisters' defended polygamy after 1872, Mormon women are currently the Church's most numerous and most effective apologists for their own condition.

Much contemporary discourse by members of both sexes, however, is characterized by increased interest in woman's "sanctioned" issues. In 1983, Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency said, "I wish with all my heart we would spend less of our time talking about rights and more talking about responsibilities" (DN 25 Sept. 1983, Metro B-1). Later he advised women specifically to "rise above the shrill clamor over rights and prerogatives and walk in the quiet dignity of a daughter of God."[7] Such a stance is much more impressive, however, when articulated by someone whose rights might be in doubt. And Sister Pat Holland

represented the orthodoxy when she said that she found it "much more useful to speak in the language of obligations and responsibilities, rather than in the language of 'rights'" (Ensign July 1980, p. 25).

The "responsibilities" in question are restricted by Holland and most others to domestic and church service (but not church "authority"). Thus women's approved options have not varied much for several decades. As Belle S. Spafford, General President of the Relief Society noted, woman is man's:

> . . . companion and helpmate; she is the child bearer and child rearer. In this role, woman finds not only her divine mission, but also her greatest life-fulfillment. . . .
>
> The place of woman in the Church, having been defined by divine decree, does not change from time to time. . . . Blessed above all women of the world are the women of the Church who have this knowledge. (IE May 1969, p. 27)

Despite increased visibility and professed respect, the contemporary Sisters' image still conforms, to large degree, to nineteenth century "true womanhood."

Notes

[1] The claim that natural women are happy in their roles causes unhappy women a great deal of concern over their "normalcy." A similar point, concerning the relationship of "righteousness" to "happiness," was made particularly clear in the KSL Television documentary titled "Depression in Mormon Women."

[2] One exception might be the Relief Society's "Mormon Handicraft Shop"--essentially a public relations operation and insignificant in comparison with the number and quality of the earlier "Cooperatives."

[3] The author is indebted to Marilyn B. Carlton for the use of some of her research: "Original Research of the 'Church News' (January, 1980 through February, 1984)," paper, University of Utah, 1984.

[4] The "News" does not publish the names of its editors or managers.

[5] The wording in the holograph, however, currently appears in Arrington and Bitton's Mormon Experience, p. 221.

[6] See for example the Denver Post's 48,000 word special report on the Church in 1982. In 1983, the Wall Street Journal published a shorter but less favorable analysis. On 15 July 1984, the Salt Lake Tribune "Lifestyle" Section expressly criticized the Utah woman's "Image" for its restriction by a conservative and authoritarian culture. In addition, the national news magazines occasionally criticize the Mormons; apostates produce increasingly hostile publications and films; and in February and March of 1984, KTVX Television in Salt Lake City produced a moderately unflattering series and "Town Meeting" concerning the Mormons.

[7] Hinckley's address, presented during a "Married Couples' Fireside," has been widly distributed on video-tape and is available in pamphlet form from the Church's Distribution Center in Salt Lake City: "Cornerstones of a Happy Home," (#PXMPO528).

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated how authoritative, public discourse creates images of the ideal Mormon woman. Discourse directed to general congregations creates shared images for most Church members; and discourse directed to smaller, target audiences reinforces or modifies the common definitions within those smaller groups. In addition, convergent perceptions from the highest-ranking or most highly-esteemed Church leaders should appear most orthodox and thus have greatest impact. Such "correct" and "enduring" definitions will be considered first in summarizing a history of the Sisters' image. Changes in patterns will be traced as successive resolutions to problems confronting the Church in general or the Sisters in particular. Finally, implications suggested throughout the study will be reviewed and additional considerations noted.

The History of the Image

Mormon women are distinguished by their religion, and a conspicuous part of the Sisters' image is the promise of unequaled glory. Endowed Mormon women expect to "reign" throughout eternity as "queens" and "priestesses"

over worlds that they govern with their husbands. These and other blessings are predicated on active Church membership and obedience to counsel. Such counsel has consistently advised the woman to fill the domestic roles of wife, mother and homemaker. In addition, these assignments allegedly come from God and derive from her fixed, God-given nature: the ability to bear children, instinctive charity, and certain inherent weaknesses in comparison with man.

Maternity, as noted in Genesis, is both a gift and a commandment from God. Charity is established as an ideal in the New Testament but then as a natural female condition in most secular and religious discourse that members of the Church might encounter. Finally, maternity and charity coalesce in the concept of female nurturance: all natural women want to nurture their own children and other members of the human family. Much authoritative discourse also reflects the conventions that women are physically weaker, less assertive and emotionally less stable than men.

In addition, woman's relationship to man is also considered to be God-given. Judeo-Christian tradition places husbands at the head to "rule over" their wives; and Mormon discourse adds woman's need for priesthood guidance. Thus "nature" and "role" reinforce each other: God created woman to be a nurturant homemaker and subordinate to man; and the combination of her natural

traits--maternity, charity, and dependency--entail such assignments. Form fits domestic functions.

Although marriage, motherhood and homemaking are the woman's primary responsibilities, church and secular options have also been defined. During those periods when the Sisters have had auxiliaries of their own, they have been asked to serve the Church through such structures. However, church service in some form has always been expected; and Mormon women have spent, on the average, enormous amounts of time in such efforts. Finally, moderate community service is approved if it does not detract from the woman's primary assignments.

Changes in the Mormon woman's image can be traced as changes in emphasis and changes in the number of approved traits and roles. The Sisters' image during the early Church period seems complex and positive. The women were termed "Mothers in Zion"; but they essentially perceived themselves as part of a select body of new and martyred "saints,"--chosen people who were reestablishing the kingdom of God on earth. In addition, Joseph Smith promised and apparently bestowed on certain Sisters some ecclesiastical powers which exceeded those held by most Protestant women of the day.

For nearly two decades after the Saints arrived in the Utah Territory, however, the Sisters' published image grew less attractive. The women were berated for insubordination: for "whining" against polygamy, traffic

with non-Mormon merchants, and insistence on trying to duplicate the middle-class life styles of the urban East. Later, general discourse increased its focus on the necessity and value of plural marriage and overlooked most gender-defined resistance. In addition, Mormon resources gradually increased, in part due to the women's efforts; and the Sisters lost some unattractive aspects of their nineteenth century image.

From the time the Church moved west to the present, however, leaders have continued to monitor the Sisters' choices in eastern-based fashions. And, during periods of extremely expensive, cumbersome, or abbreviated styles, the women have been accused of "disloyalty" and termed either "foolish" or "wicked" for adopting the fashions of Babylon. At all times, Mormon women have been told to remain chaste in behavior and modest in dress. For the last decade, however, high-fashion has not offended Church standards; and woman's current image appears more modest, wise and obedient as a result.

The single woman's image has also improved. From the turn of the century until well into the 1970s, a never-married adult woman was a stigmatized being with little promise of exaltation. Currently, the single Mormon woman enjoys acceptability and full promise; and her image is more positive. In contrast, for most of the twentieth century, wives, mothers and homemakers have been defined as "saints," "martyrs," and "queens," and have otherwise

appeared preeminent within their domestic sphere. Currently, parenting and homemaking assignments are being redefined to include more male participation; and woman's domestic image is somewhat less grand.

Women have also lost authoritative, public sanction to practice their gifts of the spirit, to control their auxiliaries, and to publish their own journals. In addition, they receive no more encouragement or recognition for serving missions than they did eighty years ago, and less than in certain periods. As a result, the Sisters' ecclesiastical image, both individually and organizationally, has been reduced.

Finally, many Church leaders encouraged women's commercial efforts and professional careers from the 1860's until statehood was achieved. The Sisters published journals from 1872 until the mid-1930s which depicted Mormon women as articulate, authoritative, and engaged in a wide variety of professional, political and community activities. Since the turn of the century, however, authoritative Mormon men have increasingly criticized the women for paid employment and time-consuming community activities. The Relief Society Magazine presented an increasingly narrow image of women following World War II; and the Sisters finally had no publication to call their own. Thus a century of gradual constriction in the image can be traced with one current exception: For the last decade authoritative discourse has intensified its focus

on the orthodox woman. And this growth in visibility, alone, has strengthened the Sisters' contemporary image.

The Image is Reasonable and Good

The foregoing has traced the history of the Mormon woman's image; but certain rhetorical dimensions of that history merit review to summarize how change is made acceptable to Church members. Typically, such revisions have been accompanied by changed "facts" within the Mormon world. In addition, if changed "policies" were proscriptive, negative aspects of the situation or the woman's behavior were usually emphasized. On the other hand, if changed policies were prescriptive, positive aspects were noted and the approved role dignified with impressive titles or by important values. Ideal images are typically defended in this manner; they must appear "necessary" to reasonable people and, if possible, "attractive" to those who must fill the roles in question.

Authoritative discourse from the early Church period defined women in part as "victims." The Sisters, themselves, reinforced this perception and characterized the Mormons as "innocent, robbed, spoiled, persecuted, and injured people"; while they, as a group, were "poor defenseless" beings, the "softer sex," and the "timid daughters" of Nauvoo. Such definitions should have bonded the Saints in shared suffering and elicited aid from sympathetic non-Mormons. Later, when the Church was accused of licentious practices, the Sisters countered

that their "virtue glittered in the abodes of man" while they bore the "dignity" of "Mother's in Israel."

During this same period, Joseph Smith created the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo as "something better" than existing organizations. He spoke at length concerning the "priesthood" and explained how Society members should "conduct" themselves. Smith also dignified Society membership when he turned significant keys to the Sisters, made them responsible for their own sins, and told them that "knowledge and intelligence" would flow down and they should "rejoice."

At that same time, Joseph Smith admitted that criticism was "circulating" against women's "laying hands on the sick, &c." But he said that "no one" was better qualified to heal than the "faithful and zealous sisters whose hearts are full of faith, tenderness, sympathy and compassion." The foregoing examples indicate how the Sisters' early image reflects in part the nineteenth century stereotypes concerning women and the problems located in the interface between the Church and its non-Mormon critics. In addition, Joseph Smith's reinforcement of the Sisters' healings suggests problems located within the Church as evolving policy confused or offended some members.

A similar condition occurred in the Utah Territory after polygamy was acknowledged. At that time, the rewards of plural marriage were constantly restated: thrones and

scepters throughout eternity with ministering angels and worlds to command. The men were reminded that God required the practice, and it was more important to "follow Brother Brigham" than to "follow a wife." On the other hand, women who rejected plural marriage were defined as annoying "whiners" who "scratched and fought" and disrupted the men's households. Or they were characterized as dangerous enemies who wanted to "break up the Church of God."

Pioneer Mormon women were also criticized as "lazy loafers" if they bought their household goods, "foolish" and "vain" if they wore imported fabrics. As more Gentile merchants entered the Great Basin, women were encouraged to "take charge of branches of business" that were suited "strength, knowledge and condition"; and Relief Societies were asked to put their "means to usury." George Q. Cannon justified such new ventures on the grounds that women who were denied responsibilities became "encumbrances." And Brigham Young claimed that woman's commerce would enlarge her "sphere of usefulness" and "develop the powers" with which she was "endowed."

At this same time, increasing numbers of Gentile votes threatened the Mormon hegemony. Women were granted suffrage in 1870; and George A. Smith of the First Presidency observed that "no one need hope to hold office in Utah if the ladies say no." Apostle Franklin Richards explained the legislation as an effort to "educate" woman and make her "useful to the state"; and the Sisters agreed

that woman's assistance was "needed" in "public affairs." However, women also defended their suffrage on the grounds that woman's motives were "purer" then man's; and women would "reform" and "clean up" the country.

Changes in policy regarding women's ecclesiastical powers were also accompanied by changes in justification. In 1852, Apostle Ezra T. Benson cited women's healings as support for Mormonism: even ministers of other sects lacked the power that Mormon women held. Later Eliza Snow encouraged Relief Society women to manage their own affairs so they would not add to the bishops' "multitudinous labors." Snow also said that the Lord had "sanctioned thousands" of the women's administrations, and Louise Y. Robison said that the "beautiful" healing "ordinance" had "always" been with the Relief Society.

In contrast, in 1921 women were told not to "assume authority" that was "given to the elders" but to obtain "permission" from their bishops to gather in "private" meetings. During this period of increased apostasy, the Sisters were also warned not to let "cabals" form in their midst and to remember that their auxiliaries were "not independent" of the priesthood. Women who later inquired about ministrations for health were told that it was "better" to "follow the plan the Lord has given" and "send for the elders" when they needed such blessings. They were told that "only by the priesthood are results manifested." They were told that the Saints confronted the

"greatest array of sin and vice" in the history of the world; and priesthood "correlation" was the plan that would strengthen the Church. And they learned that they must "not ever" make "a pretense to priesthood power" or "simulate a priesthood ordinance."

In addition, most twentieth century discourse is characterized by continued restriction of women's professional and commercial activities and increased emphasis on her domestic roles. When the Church was threatened by Gentile encroachment in the nineteenth century, George Q. Cannon told the women they should enter business as they "were able." And Brigham Young said that "anything" women could do after filling their domestic assignments would "redound" to their "honor" and to the "glory of God." In contrast, working women in the contemporary Church have been accused of "selfishness" and the desire for "luxuries." President Spencer Kimball said that the men should be "men indeed" and earn the living. Apostle Ezra Taft Benson said a working wife took "the edge off" her husband's "manhood"; and he warned that employment "diminished" woman's "godly attributes."

On the other hand, woman's domestic sphere was made grand. The Magazine told readers that social conditions were so dangerous after World War II that mothers needed to be "on the watchtower" in their homes "24 hours a day." The Improvement Era warned, "As Goes the Mother, So Goes the Child." For a generation, women heard

that "motherhood is just another name for sacrifice" while being a "partnership with God." And the good home has been defined as a "holy" place, and "the source of happiness, serenity, and peace" which houses "the pure, undiluted heavenly joys." Within this sanctuary woman has evolved from a "queen" presiding over her "little kingdom" (or residing on a "pedestal") to a "vice-president" in the family "corporation" and her husband's "full-partner."

Such titles do not give woman equal authority with her husband. However, she is told that she is his equal and she "shares equally" in the blessings of the priesthood. The Mormon woman is also told that her auxiliaries have a "companion" relationship with the priesthood; and she will stand as a "joint inheritor" with her husband in the "fullness of all things" including the company of God and Christ and worlds to populate and govern. Finally, members have been told that such promises are "more than any other Church has dared to offer in the history of the world" (ChNews 31 Mar. 1923, Sec. 3, p. vii). Such images are sufficiently attractive that only a few Mormon women question their roles in formal discourse.

Final Observations

Additional correlates to changes in the image might be mentioned. Most significantly, a positive balance has usually been maintained. Currently, a national concern over the state of the family makes the Mormon mother a paradigm both without and within the Church. However, even

during those periods when the Sisters have been most harshly criticized or had the fewest approved options, the exclusiveness of Mormon truth and exaltation has also been prominent in the discourse.

In addition, when the number of woman's options are constricted, those remaining take on magnificent proportions: In 1979, N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency said that woman's domestic and neighborhood "duties" would satisfy all her "talents," "interests," "creativity," "dedication, energy and skills, which so many seek to satisfy outside the home." Apostle Mark E. Petersen said that the gospel "elevated" women like nothing else and made them "queens" in their homes. And mothers were termed "partners" with God.

It is also interesting to note that the same kinds of warrants justify both traditional and nontraditional aspects of the Sisters' image. Both sexes have cited woman's "nature" to justify either a continuation or change of options for the Sisters; and both have identified "social need" for the same purpose. Both also argue from the authoritarian posture of "God's will" concerning women. However, men more often argue pragmatically to defend family, Church or social needs. But women, more often than men, argue for woman's self-actualization. In addition, women have historically addressed other women rather than a general church audience. Thus, most Mormons have encountered the "social-

pragmatic" values; and they appear to be more highly ranked.

Finally, because this study has focused on issues of religious belief and practice, the potential for widely varying response is strong. At this point, therefore, it is important to stress again the goal of the research: an understanding of the orthodox Mormon woman's image. This study was not designed to evaluate the many dimensions of the woman's image except as they qualify the whole of it. Nor has effort been made to evaluate changes in either discourse or practice except as those changes relate to the image, itself.

For example, Mormon women lost authoritative, public sanction to practice their gifts of the spirit; and the practice dwindled and died. However, the Church may have profited by losing that quaint dimension and appearing more like the large, mainstream religions. As "Mormon images" appeared more conventional after the Manifesto, public acceptance of the Church also increased. On the other hand, when women did practice the gifts of the spirit, they reported feelings of strength and joy; and their efforts commanded some respect. "Strength" in such ecclesiastical authority, "joy" in practice, and "respect" for these specific spiritual powers are missing from current discourse. New aspects have not taken their place. Thus, it is reasonable to say that woman's image has been reduced as well.

As a second example, the women's organizations have lost autonomy and prominence as priesthood authority has been extended. In one situation, the Relief Society's Social Services Program was essentially overtaken by the Church's Welfare plan. It may be that welfare cases have been better handled through a large, centralized agency. The Welfare Program ultimately created extensive resources and earned non-Mormon recognition and respect. On the other hand, the Relief Society woman's image as a knowledgeable, visible and relatively powerful agent within her community has been reduced; and the Mormon woman's total image is therefore poorer. (One might also note that while reduced responsibility is interpreted as "loss" by those who prize opportunity, reduced programs and office may be interpreted by some Sisters as "relief" from the "pressure" to serve.)

In regard to this same change in responsibility, priesthood correlation and supervision may, indeed, have prevented "wasteful duplication of efforts" and "harmful" competition and thus created greater efficiency and a more certain orthodoxy within the Church. On the other hand, the women's loss of authority and prominence reads <u>as</u> "loss" to the image if one compares that image over time, or contrasts the Mormon woman's image with that of women in most Protestant religions, with women in industrialized societies, or with the Mormon man.

Significant changes also occurred in the women's publications. The breadth of topics and reporting of national and international soft news concerning women gradually grew constricted. However, the Improvement Era followed a similar pattern. Early volumes of the Era included articles on dozens of topics including current politics, Intermountain news, the advances of science and the condition of the weather. Yet, as the Church moved through the twentieth century, such information was no doubt more competently and attractively produced by the national magazines and many local papers; and the Era narrowed its focus.

In regard to this same issue, men's perceptions gradually infiltrated the women's publications; but women's interpretations did not increase in the general magazines after World War II until the last decade. Ultimately, both of the women's auxiliaries lost their independent journals. Such changes intensified the men's perceptions and so should have made the culture more homogeneous. However, large quantities of Mormon discourse claim that women are inherently and significantly different from men. If so, now that women's perceptions are reduced and heavily edited, Mormon women might struggle to reconcile their experiential world with official definitions of themselves. And men receive little feedback concerning their perceptions.

In summary, this study has traced a movement from a more pluralistic to a less complex image of the Sisters. However, that conclusion inadequately reflects significant Mormon values that support a variant interpretation. For example, authoritative discourse claims that the contemporary woman's image is congruent with God's design and thus contains all of the "right" traits and roles. In addition, authoritative discourse ranks "obedience" higher than holding "authority"; and "eternal roles" are prized above secular "rights" and "options." Therefore, what might be interpreted as "loss" or "constriction" from one perspective is authoritatively defined as "magnification."

In addition, Mormon women are now the attractive topic of much contemporary Church discourse, and have gained visibility and stature as a result. On the other hand, Mormon men still essentially control such discourse; while Mormon women still have less freedom to construct their public image than many Western women. This contrast, and an apparently constricted image, distinguish the Sisters for some observers. But piety and sharing in the blessings of the priesthood distinguish most Mormon women for themselves.

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